

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns in a dark green color, framing the entire page.

The Moral Government of God

Nathaniel W. Taylor

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

SECTION I:

WHAT IS A PERFECT MORAL GOVERNMENT?

OR,

MORAL GOVERNMENT IN THE ABSTRACT.

LECTURE I: A perfect Moral Government defined.

LECTURE II: A perfect Moral Government Involves the exercise of authority through the medium of law.

LECTURE III: The law of a perfect moral government requires benevolence as the sum of obedience, and forbids selfishness as the sum of disobedience on the part of its subjects.

LECTURE IV: It must express the Lawgiver's preference of the action required, to Its opposite, all things considered.

LECTURE V: The law of a perfect Moral Government involves sanctions.

LECTURE VI: The law of a perfect Moral Government involves sanctions, (continued.)

LECTURE VII: The necessity of legal sanctions shown.

LECTURE VIII: That the legal sanctions of a perfect moral government include the highest degree of natural good possible in each case of obedience, and the highest degree of natural evil possible in each case of disobedience.

SECTION II:

THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD

AS KNOWN

BY THE LIGHT OF NATURE.

LECTURE I: God administers a Moral Government In some sense.

LECTURE II: God enforces conformity to his law by authority.

LECTURE III: God's administration is equitable.

LECTURE IV: The possibility of a future state precludes all objections against the Divine equity.

LECTURE V: God administers his moral government under a gracious economy.

LECTURE VI: We must suppose God to administer his government in the way of exact retribution, or through an atonement.

LECTURE VII: God governs with rightful authority.
LECTURE VIII: The benevolence of God may be proved.
LECTURE IX: Objection from the existence of moral evil.
LECTURE X: The present system not only may be, but is the best possible to the Creator.
LECTURE XI: Nature of Divine Revelation.
LECTURE XII: Revelation necessary to secure the practical influence of the truth.
LECTURE XIII: Question to be decided by human reason. -- Limits of reason. -- Perversion of reason
LECTURE XIV: The Importance of revelation renders it probable, if not certain, that God would give a revelation.

SECTION III:

THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD AS REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES

LECTURE I: THE FACT AND THE PROOF.
LECTURE II: PRELIMINARY.
LECTURE III: THE MOSAIC LAW A THEOCRACY.
LECTURE IV: THE MOSAIC LAW A THEOCRACY.
LECTURE V: THE MOSAIC LAW A THEOCRACY.
LECTURE VI: THE MOSAIC LAW A THEOCRACY.
LECTURE VII: THE NATURE OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT AS REVEALED.
LECTURE VIII: THE NATURE OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT AS REVEALED.
LECTURE IX: THE NATURE OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT AS REVEALED.
LECTURE X: THE NATURE OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT AS REVEALED.
LECTURE XI: THE NATURE OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT AS REVEALED.
LECTURE XII: THE NATURE OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT AS REVEALED.
LECTURE XIII: THE NATURE OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT AS REVEALED.

APPENDIX -- No. I:

ESSAY ON JUSTICE AS THE ATTRIBUTE OF A PERFECT MORAL GOVERNOR.

PART I. -- CONCEPTION OF JUSTICE ANALYZED AND

EXPLAINED.

PART II. -- DIFFERENT SPECIES OF JUSTICE WITH
APPLICATION TO THEOLOGICAL ERRORS.

APPENDIX -- No. II:

ESSAY ON THE PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

PART I. -- RELATION OF PROVIDENTIAL TO MORAL
GOVERNMENT.

PART II. -- THE PROVIDENTIAL PURPOSES OF GOD.

PART III. -- THE DIFFERENT KINDS OR SPECIES OF
PROVIDENCE.

APPENDIX -- No. III:

ESSAY ON THE QUESTION -- IN WHAT DIFFERENT RESPECTS
MAY GOD BE SUPPOSED TO PURPOSE DIFFERENT AND EVEN
OPPOSITE EVENTS?

PART I. -- QUESTION EXPLAINED AND DISCUSSED.

PART II. -- OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

PART III. -- ADDITIONAL OBJECTIONS.

APPENDIX -- No. IV:

ARE ANY OF THE PUNISHMENTS OF CIVIL LAW LEGAL
SANCTIONS, EXCEPT THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH?
(VIDE LECTURE VII., SECT. I., VOL. I.)

APPENDIX -- No. V:

THOUGHTS ON THE EVIDENCE FOR DIVINE REVELATION, AND
ESPECIALLY THE ARGUMENT FROM MIRACLES.

LECTURES ON THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

By

NATHANIEL W. TAYLOR, D. D.,

1859

LATE DWIGHT PROFESSOR OF DIDACTIC THEOLOGY
IN YALE COLLEGE.

**"OF LAW THERE CAN BE NO LESS ACKNOWLEDGED THAN THAT
HER SEAT IS THE BOSOM OF GOD--HER VOICE THE HARMONY OF
THE WORLD"**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

SECTION I:

**WHAT IS A PERFECT MORAL GOVERNMENT? OR, MORAL
GOVERNMENT IN THE ABSTRACT**

LECTURE I A perfect Moral Government defined.

**LECTURE II A perfect Moral Government Involves the exercise of
authority through the medium of law.**

**LECTURE III The law of a perfect moral government requires
benevolence as the sum of obedience, and forbids selfishness as
the sum of disobedience on the part of its subjects.**

LECTURE IV It must express the Lawgiver's preference of the action required, to its opposite, all things considered.

LECTURE V The law of a perfect Moral Government involves sanctions.

LECTURE VI The law of a perfect Moral Government involves sanctions, (continued.)

LECTURE VII The necessity of legal sanctions shown.

LECTURE VIII That the legal sanctions of a perfect moral government include the highest degree of natural good possible in each case of obedience, and the highest degree of natural evil possible in each case of disobedience.

SECTION II:

THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD AS KNOWN BY THE LIGHT OF NATURE.

LECTURE I God administers a Moral Government In some sense.

LECTURE II God enforces conformity to his law by authority.

LECTURE III God's administration is equitable.

LECTURE IV The possibility of a future state precludes all objections against the Divine equity.

LECTURE V God administers his moral government under a gracious economy.

LECTURE VI We must suppose God to administer his government in the way of exact retribution, or through an atonement.

LECTURE VII God governs with rightful authority.

LECTURE VIII The benevolence of God may be proved.

LECTURE IX Objection from the existence of moral evil.

LECTURE X The present system not only may be, but is the best

possible to the Creator.

LECTURE XI Nature of Divine Revelation.

LECTURE XII Revelation necessary to secure the practical influence of the truth.

LECTURE XIII Question to be decided by human reason. -- Limits of reason. -- Perversion of reason

LECTURE XIV The Importance of revelation renders it probable, if not certain, that God would give a revelation.

SECTION III:

THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD AS REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES.

LECTURE I: THE FACT AND THE PROOF.

LECTURE II: PRELIMINARY.

LECTURE III THE MOSAIC LAW A THEOCRACY.

LECTURE IV The Mosaic law shown to exhibit, by representation, God's moral government.

LECTURE V The Mosaic law shown to be a theocracy from the prevalence in early ages of representative language and symbolic actions.

LECTURE VI The views of Paul in respect to this system.

LECTURE VII Three theories in support of it: The Augustinian, the Arminian, the Edwardian.

LECTURE VIII Theologians too often confine it to a legal system. -- Consequent errors.

LECTURE IX The law, in requiring obedience, prohibits disobedience, and vice versa.

LECTURE X The law in the sum of its requirements.

LECTURE XI The law in the import of its sanctions.

LECTURE XII The penalty of the law.

LECTURE XIII The law expresses God's preference of obedience to disobedience, all things considered.

APPENDIX--No. I:

ESSAY ON JUSTICE AS THE ATTRIBUTE OF A PERFECT MORAL GOVERNOR.

PART I. -CONCEPTION OF JUSTICE ANALYZED AND EXPLAINED.

PART II. -DIFFERENT SPECIES OF JUSTICE WITH APPLICATION TO THEOLOGICAL ERRORS.

APPENDIX--No. II:

ESSAY ON THE PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

PART I.-RELATION OF PROVIDENTIAL TO MORAL GOVERNMENT.

PART II.-THE PROVIDENTIAL PURPOSES OF GOD.

PART III.-THE DIFFERENT KINDS OR SPECIES OF PROVIDENCE.

APPENDIX--No. III:

ESSAY ON THE QUESTION--IN WHAT DIFFERENT RESPECTS MAY GOD BE SUPPOSED TO PURPOSE DIFFERENT AND EVEN OPPOSITE EVENTS?

PART I.--QUESTION EXPLAINED AND DISCUSSED.

PART II.--OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

PART III.--ADDITIONAL OBJECTIONS.

APPENDIX--No. IV:

ARE ANY OF THE PUNISHMENTS OF CIVIL LAW LEGAL SANCTIONS, EXCEPT THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH? (VIDE LECTURE VII., SECT. I., VOL. I.)

APPENDIX--No. V:

THOUGHTS ON THE EVIDENCE FOR DIVINE REVELATION, AND ESPECIALLY THE ARGUMENT FROM MIRACLES.

INTRODUCTION

The Moral Government of God was the great thought of Dr. Taylor's intellect, and the favorite theme of his instructions in theology. It occupied his mind more than any and every other subject. He was ever ready to enter upon the investigation of any truth that was nearly or remotely connected with this. He was never weary of grappling with such inquiries, whether they were suggested for the first time by his own ingenuity, or had been discussed with greater or less success for centuries by speculative and earnest men. To vindicate the ways of God to man, was the object to which all his energies were consecrated, and upon which were expended the ardor of his glowing soul and the force of his strong and steadfast will. These secondary objects which the majority of men, even students and theologians, esteem important, were freely sacrificed to the accomplishment of this commanding purpose. To this the whole living man was consecrated with an activity and intensity which have not often been equaled.

This object directed all his studies. All his investigations had their starting point from this central theme, and however far he may seem to some to have wandered in the maze of scholastic distinctions or subtle refinements, he never lost the clue by which he returned to the subject of his great argument. Hence his interest in psychology. He studied man as

an intellectual and moral being, that he might understand God's government over him. It was in the light of man's relations to God, that he sought to know what are his capacities, what his obligations, what his present condition, and what his future destiny. With the same intent he investigated with a passionate interest the nature of civil government, the authority of human law in all its varieties, and the principles by which the various forms of human society are organized and held together. He reasoned, that man being the subject of all these societies, duty being the obligation common to all, and law the expression of the authority by which they are sustained--they must furnish analogies to that moral government of God which comprehends the universe within its dominion. That he might understand this "civitas Dei," this "kingdom of God," he studied law, authority, and justice in their essential nature and constituent elements. Indeed, concerning theology itself, he would have adopted with few qualifications the definition given by Leibnitz, "*Quæ est quasi jurisprudentia quædam specialis, sed eadem fundamentalis ratione ceterarum. Est enim velut doctrina quædam de jure publico quod obtinet in republica Dei in homines.*" Above all, he diligently and earnestly sought to find in the Scriptures a true and consistent system of principles in respect to the government of God; and to develop such a system from the Scriptures as should be also consistent with the teachings of reason and conscience, he considered the great duty of the student and the teacher of theology. His views of theology as the science which has this for its object, were elevated and even sublime. The enthusiastic language in which he was accustomed to express himself on this inspiring theme, will not soon be forgotten by those who have heard him speak.

He tried every system of theology by this test: what are the principles concerning the moral government of God on which it rests, or what are the views of God's authority over man which it inculcates? If its principles were judged to be defective, vague, obscure or false--if the system did not 'commend itself to the conscience' by asserting those truths to which the conscience responds, it was rejected wholly or in part, whatever was the authority of the theologian or of the church whose name it bore.

It was not, however, solely nor chiefly, from the relations of this subject to scientific theology, that he regarded it as of such commanding importance. His interest in this as in all other subjects, even in theology itself, was founded in a strong conviction of its practical usefulness. While

he was a pastor, he wrote two sermons on the Moral Government of God, in order to vindicate the authority of His law, the justice of His retributions, and the necessity of an atonement. His interest in this subject was increased by the illustration of the practical importance of just and well settled principles in regard to it, which was developed in the Unitarian controversy. He constantly and earnestly insisted, that by the Christian preacher no subject needed to be so well understood, to enable him successfully to defend and enforce the great truths of the gospel. In his intercourse with his fellow-men and in the conduct of his own life, he manifested a loyalty to the King of Heaven, even in connection with the most trivial events, which lent a charm to all the manifestations of his character. In times of agonizing sorrow, he would utter great truths concerning God's administration, its glory and goodness, which showed that his principles on these subjects were his daily sustenance and comfort. One of the most impressive scenes of his last days was the utterance at parting with a friend, in tones of almost seraphic ardor, of the ascription of the apostle, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever."

The writers to whom Dr. Taylor was most indebted, and whose principles he sought to apply, to complete, and in some cases to correct, were Bishop Butler and Jonathan Edwards. Bishop Butler suggested the principles and the course of argument concerning the benevolence and equity of God's government, which were matured by him into a more exact system, and carried only to their legitimate conclusions. President Edwards was often in his hands, and the careful reader of these volumes will see the relation of many of the discussions to the teachings of that prince of New England divines, and to the whole current of what is called New England theology. The works of all the New England divines were the familiar hand-books of his reading. He was also entirely at home with the writers on natural theology, for which the English church in other times was so distinguished. From all of these authors, and the bold and energetic workings of his own mind, he reasoned out the system of principles and conclusions which is found in these volumes.

These lectures were not delivered in precisely the same order and continuous succession in which they are now presented to the reader. They were given in different portions, as parts of a course of theological instruction, each in its assigned position, and were separated from each

other by the discussion of other topics. It was thought expedient, however, to arrange them in a continuous series, so as to present a complete and connected view of all that he wrote on this fundamental topic in theology. To the lectures on moral government, have been appended other essays and lectures on subjects that are naturally connected with this.

The first section embraces the discussion of the essential nature of moral government, preliminary to any inquiries as to what is the actual government of the universe, as we discover it by the light of nature. Section second treats of that government as it is made known by the light of nature, and discusses some of those questions of fact concerning the actual administration of the universe, which are appropriate to natural theology. The last four lectures of this section present a brief view of the necessity and evidences of revelation, so far as the light of nature and the lessons of human experience furnish the materials for an argument. Section third contains an extended discussion of the government of God as exhibited in revelation. Such a discussion should, in one view of the subject, according to the opinions expressed in the first section by the author, comprehend a complete system of revealed theology. It in fact gives us only his views of the nature of the Jewish Theocracy, as being a representation or visible manifestation of the unseen kingdom of God, and a careful examination of the law of God as it is revealed in this theocracy, and by the direct teachings of the Scriptures. The opinions of the author in respect to some of the most important doctrines of the Scriptures, are however given with great distinctness, in connection with the treatment of his principal theme. Indeed, the most superficial reader of these lectures cannot fail to see in them all, from the beginning to the end--even the most abstract and metaphysical--a distinct and direct reference to the doctrines of atonement and justification. In the Appendix, will be found an essay on "Justice," which has a double interest, as a vigorous handling of the theme in its relations to civil society and the rights of man, and also in its bearings upon certain theological theories of the atonement. The essay on "the Providential Government and Purposes of God" is intimately related to the just and exact understanding of his moral government. The discussion of the question, "In what sense God can purpose opposite events," naturally arises in every attempt to vindicate the Holy One from responsibility for moral evil. The essay on "the Penalties of the Civil Law" is explained by its relation

to the lecture, out of which it arises. The discussion of Miracles seems to be required by the lectures in the first volume that treat of the philosophical possibility and truth of the Christian revelation. The Lectures and Appendix present the views of the author upon some of the most important questions involved in the nature and the evidences of natural and revealed theology. These views it seemed desirable to collect and arrange in a single work.

The opinions expressed are given to the reader as the author believed and taught, and in the language in which he uttered them. His style was formed in the school of Butler and Edwards, and owes some of its peculiarities to the constant repetition of those definitions and distinctions, which he wished to impress upon the ear and to fix in the minds of the pupils who heard him. His style was adapted to the ear, and not to the eye; it was formed in and for the lecture-room, not for the printed page. Practiced critics and editors will easily understand how difficult it is to condense or correct such a style.

It may be interesting to some of Dr. Taylor's friends and pupils to know, that the first lecture in the second volume was written only a few months before his death. It is almost the last word concerning the importance of a correct and vigorous theology which he was permitted to write, and may be viewed as his dying testimony on this most important theme.

N. P. [Noah Porter]

YALE COLLEGE, Jan. 19, 1959.

SECTION I: WHAT IS A PERFECT MORAL GOVERNMENT? OR, MORAL GOVERNMENT IN THE ABSTRACT.

LECTURE I: A perfect Moral Government defined.

Can we determine the nature of a perfect Moral Government? A perfect Moral Government defined. --The definition explained and vindicated in the following particulars:

I. Moral Government is an influence on moral beings.

II. Moral Government Implies a moral Governor.

III. Moral Government is designed so to control the action of moral beings, as to secure the great end of action on their part.

IV. The influence of a perfect Moral Government is the influence of authority.

MORAL GOVERNMENT may be said in general terms to be the government of moral beings by the influence of authority. It may be distinguished into different kinds, as it is vested in different administrators, and is administered over different communities. The more prominent of these different kinds of moral government are the government of God over his moral creation, which is above every other--the government of the state or civil government, and the government of the family or parental government.

We may suppose that both parental and civil governments, as manifestly indispensable in some form to man's present well-being, are alike the ordinances of a benevolent Deity, and subservient to the end of that higher system in which men are more directly the subjects of God's moral dominion.

For the purpose however of distinguishing the different kinds of moral government, so far as to aid us in our present inquiry, we may suppose

the family and the state each to exist as a distinct and independent community, and to be under a jurisdiction peculiar and appropriate to itself. As members of these particular communities, men would be under a necessity of acting in one manner rather than in another, to secure the highest well-being of the whole. As bound by such a necessity, and capable as moral beings of so acting as to defeat this great end, and to produce the opposite result in misery, they are the fit subjects of moral government, and actually as members of the family and the state, live under such a government.

Our first notion of moral government is obviously derived from that which is parental, and is extended and modified in that conception which we form of the government of the state. Since however, both are marred by undeniable imperfection, we can appeal to neither as a perfect example of moral government. Nor can it be pretended that we have any example of a perfect moral government, which in the present world is fully unfolded to our inspection in all the detail of its administration, and in all the completeness of its issues. The most that can be claimed is, that there is such a government entered upon--one in the actual progress of administration--one which, though not fully achieving its own perfect end, the highest conceivable well-being of all--is yet so distinctly characterized by a strict adherence to the principles of equity, though modified in their application by a gracious economy, as clearly to reveal its absolute perfection.

By a perfect moral government then, is here meant not a moral government which actually secures, but one which in its true nature and tendency is perfectly adapted to secure, and which unperturbed would secure the great and true end of such a government, even the highest conceivable well-being of its subjects. We may suppose such a government to exist, and the end which it is designed and fitted to accomplish, to be partially or wholly defeated, solely through perversion by its subjects. Such perversion however, would in no degree obscure, but necessarily imply the absolute perfection of the system. Nor if we suppose that on account of the foreseen perversion of a perfect system, it would be better in relation to actual results to adopt another system, still the adoption of the latter could be justified only on the ground of the foreseen perversion in fact of the former, and would therefore imply its absolute perfection. We may further suppose that an absolutely perfect

system of moral government would be adopted by an infinitely perfect Being, notwithstanding he should foresee some degree of actual perversion and counteraction of its tendencies; for it might still be true, that he should also foresee that the actual results of such a system would be far better than those of an imperfect system, even the best possible which he can secure.

Can we then know what are the essential elements of a perfect moral government--those elements which must constitute such a government in the hands of an infinitely perfect Being, the knowledge of which must be of the highest concern to us, as the subjects of such a government? I answer, that there is no subject which mankind generally better understand; none which they are under a more imperious necessity of understanding than moral government in some of its existing forms; none of whose reality they have a more constant and sure conviction; none of whose nature in all essential respects they have a more adequate comprehension. There cannot be an existing state of man, as related to man, there cannot be a social state (and without this man can exist to no important purpose), from which the idea of a moral government and the full conviction of its reality and necessity can be separated. This conviction begins almost with our existence, even so early as when the mother by some look or action first impresses the mind of the child with the necessity of submitting his will to her will. Thus the condition of human infancy places us from the beginning in society, and naturally and necessarily introduces subjection to superior wisdom, power and goodness. From the dawn of the intellect, our parents prescribe things to be done, and forbid things not to be done, approving and disapproving, rewarding and punishing according to our doings. Thus they early assume authority over us, aiming at one comprehensive result in all our doings--that of bringing our will into conformity with theirs.

Now why is this, and who does not know why it is? It is because no family could subsist, much less be prosperous and happy without it. No matter how powerful may be the motives in other forms of exhibition, to promote the harmony and well-being of the domestic circle--no matter how, strong the mutual affections which prevail, nor how wise and good the counsels and advice which are given, it would all be naught, were there no law, no authority, no calling to account, no retribution, that is, no moral government. Why is this? Let the appeal be made to any parent who has

the heart of a parent. Why is it, that he governs his children by authority; why assume this prerogative as unquestionable? Is it, that he takes pleasure in so doing for its own sake? Is it, that he loves for its own sake, to restrain their liberty, to cross their inclinations and often to inflict suffering? Or, is it because he knows their incompetence to govern themselves as well as he can govern them--because he knows their ignorance, their passion, their waywardness, and because he knows, that he should be wanting in affection and a due parental oversight and guardianship, if he did not do, what he so surely knows to be for the best? In a word, is it not because he knows the necessity to the well-being of the family, of maintaining, do what else he may, parental authority? What parent, what child, what human being does not understand the nature, the design, and the necessity of moral government? Who does not know all this, as it results from the nature of the human mind, as surely as he knows the necessity of food and of common air, which arises from the nature of the human body?

If we pass from the family to the state, we find the same familiar and well-known thing, having a wider range, and a higher end; though more rigorously maintained in its administration, and more fully developed in its nature and essential characteristics. Born, as most men are under some form of civil government, they learn what it is for some ruling power to exercise authority over many, as the necessary means of a nation's welfare. Here we find for the most part a great variety of statutes and enactments, having respect to the overt doings of men, but all based on one fundamental law; all implying its existence, and its supreme obligation,--the law of subjection to the powers that be. We find a sovereign Will--a Moral Governor--and THE GREAT FACT assumed, conceded, and acted upon--the absolute necessity of authoritative law of a supreme unquestionable right to govern. We find a necessity of it to the existence and well-being of the state yea, to the prevention of utter anarchy and wretchedness which no one in his senses can doubt, dispute or deny. Suppose what else we may, either in respect to him who governs or those who are governed; the authority of law must be recognized and maintained, or all is lost. Whatever sacrifice may be involved--whatever may be lost or gained, this one thing--this indispensable means of the public weal must be maintained. And who does not understand the nature, the design, the necessity of civil government? Who does not know, that at without it human society could

not exist--much less attain any tolerable degree of prosperity and enjoyment? What could be done without the fundamental law, claiming submission to authority--and what would this law be without authority sustained by sanctions--without judges, courts, trials, executive officers, sentences passed and executed, and a sovereign will, from which the whole emanates.

I might exhibit the same thing, as it shows itself and its necessity, in lower and feebler forms, in all the relations of life. In our friendships, how much depends on the discharge of certain duties; how are we held under responsibility, and failing here, how are we judged unworthy, and cast away. In neighborhood intercourse, in private circles, in the forms of politeness, and even in street civilities, who does not know, what it is to be responsible to the will of another, who does not know that in these matters there is a law, that a record is kept, that offenders are marked, that there is a tribunal, a judgment and a retribution? Indeed were there two, and only two voluntary beings in the universe, in all respects equals and existing together for their mutual well-being, the will of one in certain respects, would be law to the will of the other, involving the right to enforce it, and with power involving an actual enforcement, by appropriate sanctions. It is the right of one in many cases, to have his will done by another; and, wherever this right exists, especially with power to enforce it, we have an exemplification of the essential characteristics of moral government, whether this right extends to an individual, a family, an empire or a universe.

We all know then, what moral government is, and that men cannot exist in society without it. In that form of it called civil government, the lowest culprit in his prison knows its general nature, its principles, its end, and its absolute necessity to this end, as well as the judge who condemns him. Not one of us, if we could not rely on its protection, would dare to go through the streets of our city. Without moral government, we should no sooner venture into human society than venture into a den of wolves. These things are enough to show how necessary moral government is to man, and how well too the thing itself is understood by man.

But if neither parental nor civil government furnishes a perfect specimen of moral government, how can one know in what its perfection consists; or what such a government would be in the hands of a Being of infinite perfection?

I answer that we are able to trace with entire accuracy the essential imperfections of every human specimen, and thus to determine what is essential to constitute a perfect moral government. Knowing the end of a moral government, what is fitted to defeat it, and to a greater or less extent, what is adapted to that end and necessary to it, we can to this extent decide, what is not and what is, essential to the perfection of such a system. Man may not be qualified to give absolute perfection to such a system, but it does not follow that he cannot conceive of its perfection. Suppose that an absolutely perfect watch has never been made, and never can be by man, does it therefore follow, that it is not easy to conceive of such perfection as within the reach of the power and skill which man does not possess; or that man himself cannot specify the very changes in the materials or the structure, which would give it absolute perfection? What is supposable in such a case, we claim to be true in that under consideration. We are so well acquainted with the subject, that we know wherein the imperfection in the work of man consists, and can trace it to its cause. We know so well, what are the true object and end of a moral government, we know so well that by some things that end must be defeated, and we know so well that other things are perfectly adapted to secure that end; we know so well wherein all human forms of moral government are imperfect, and so well that such deficiencies could not mar a moral government in the hands of an infinitely perfect Being; we know so well what are the principles of moral action, and what are the means most perfectly fitted to influence moral beings--in short, we know so many things, that we can be at no loss to decide what a moral government must be in all essential respects, when administered by a perfect God.

I am not saying, that we can tell all that God will or will not do in such an administration, but that we can decide what he will and will not do, in certain important and essential respects. I hope to show you, that there is truth on this subject which man can know, and from which, in its hearings on his immortal interests he cannot escape, and that while there is such a God as Jehovah is clearly revealed, we are not doomed to look out on his ways and his doings as on chaos and darkness, but that, with an effulgence as broad as his own creation, and as clear as the light which is poured over it, he shows an end and a system of means worthy of

such an author--a moral creation, comprising beings made in his own image, with tendencies and sure results that will "answer the great idea of him who made it."

I assume, then, what I shall hereafter attempt to prove, and what is properly assumed for the purpose of explanation, that a moral system, or a community of moral beings, as distinguished from any other system not moral, is the best means of the best end, and that a perfect moral government over such a community is the necessary means of accomplishing this end, and is therefore dictated and demanded by perfect benevolence. I now propose to define and explain what I intend by A PERFECT MORAL GOVERNMENT; and to justify the definition.

By a perfect moral government I intend--

THE INFLUENCE OF THE AUTHORITY, OR OF THE RIGHTFUL AUTHORITY OF A MORAL GOVERNOR ON MORAL BEINGS, DESIGNED SO TO CONTROL THEIR ACTION AS TO SECURE THE GREAT END OF ACTION ON THEIR PART, THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF LAW.

In explaining and justifying this definition, I propose to consider the several parts of it, more or less extensively, as the case may seem to require.

I. A moral government is an influence on moral beings, or, on beings capable of moral action.

While this will be readily admitted, there are some things involved in it, which demand consideration. One is, that the influence of moral government being an influence on moral beings and designed to control moral action, is as diverse in its nature from the influence of physical causes, as moral action is from a physical effect; or as a moral cause is from a physical cause. It is an influence, which is designed and fitted to give, not the necessity, but merely the certainty of its effect; and which leaves the moral liberty of the subject unimpaired. Hence, it is not essential to this influence that it actually secure the kind of action which it is fitted to secure. A perfect moral government may exist with all its influence, and yet be wholly counteracted in its designed effect on its subjects, since it is obvious that such a government may be maintained over subjects in revolt as well as over subjects who are loyal. Rebellion

against government, cannot exist when there is no government. A perfect moral government then, as a government over moral beings, in respect to any cause of action giving the necessity of action, leaves every subject as free to perform the action which it aims to prevent, as to perform that which it aims to secure.

II. A perfect moral government implies a moral governor.

In this respect a moral government differs from a moral system, as a species differs from a genus. A moral system may be conceived to exist either with or without a moral governor. We can conceive of moral beings, who should act under the direct influence of motives, so far as these reach the mind in the perceived nature, tendencies and consequences of action, though there were no influence of a superior being sustaining the relation of a ruler or moral governor. The direct influence of motives, as these are thus apprehended by the mind, and that influence which results from the character and relation of a moral governor, though different, may yet coexist; and either may be supposed to exist without the other. The former without the latter would simply imply a moral system without a moral government. The latter with or without the former, would imply a moral system in that particular form which includes a moral government. The peculiar influence therefore, which arises from the character and relation of a moral governor, whether other influences combine with it or not, is the essential constituting influence of moral government. So far as moral beings act under the peculiar influences of a moral governor, so far and no farther, do they act under the influence of moral government.

III. The influence of a perfect moral government is designed so to control the action of moral beings, as to secure the great end of action on their part.

It will be admitted that this influence is designed to control the action of moral beings in relation to some end which depends on their action in a community of such beings, and which is the best end, and in this sense the great end of such action. What then, is this end? I answer--It is the production of well-being, even the highest well-being of all, and the prevention of misery, even the highest misery of all. A moral being is capable of performing two and only two kinds of moral action, and as a subject of moral government, is under an absolute necessity of performing one or, the other in all action. He cannot, as a moral being, be

inactive. His nature and relations necessarily exclude alike inaction and all neutrality of action, or action in which he does not act morally. Again, the nature--the peculiar powers and properties of a moral being--show that he is qualified to perform, what no other being is qualified to perform--that kind of action, which tends to produce the best conceivable end of all action, the highest conceivable well-being of all sentient beings, both of himself and of all others. It is this nature of a moral being, which gives to his existence its peculiar value--its pre-eminent worth, compared with the nature of any other being. It is this, which, as a creature, raises man to companionship with his Creator and with creatures the most exalted, and brings him under obligation to act with them in principle, in purpose and in all subordinate and executive doings, for the accomplishment of the great end of all action here on earth, and amid the scenes of eternity.

Exalted thus by his nature as a moral being, he is by the same nature qualified to act in a manner which tends to defeat the great end of his creation, and to bring on himself and on all other beings, unmingled and perfect misery. And, what adds inconceivable importance to such a being is, that he cannot avoid, as we have said, acting in one or the other of these two modes of acting now specified. Even in every subordinate action, he acts from principle, he acts with or in the form of, a supreme elective preference. These existing together are often called his action; and its tendency as moral action is the tendency of his action in its principle; or rather, the tendency of the action in principle is its true tendency. To neglect to act in that mode which is fitted to secure the great and true end of all action on his part, viz., the highest well-being of all is not only to sacrifice and defeat that end, but it is necessarily to act in that mode, which in its true tendency is fitted to produce the opposite result--the highest misery of all.

Every thing of real significance in the being of a moral agent, viewed in relation to himself and to other beings, every thing virtuous and praiseworthy in the use of his exalted powers, every thing vicious and blamable in the abuse of them, every thing that is dignified and honorable, every thing that is mean and disgraceful, every thing that affords inward peace and triumph, every thing that brings remorse and despair every good and every evil to himself and to others--all, all depends on action. The highest happiness and the highest misery of all, all that blesses and all that curses, life and death, are in the power of

action. Such issues, according to the true nature and tendencies of things, depend on the action of moral beings.

Here, then, the design of a perfect moral government is manifest. The design of the pendulum of a clock to control and direct its motion, so as to mark the divisions of time as the true end of the machine, is not more obvious than is the design of a perfect moral government so to control the action of moral beings, as to secure the great end of action on their part, viz., the production of the highest well-being of all, and the prevention of the highest misery of all.

IV. The influence of a perfect moral government is the influence of authority.

By the influence of authority, I mean that influence which results from that right to command, which is founded in competence and disposition to govern in the best manner, and which imposes an obligation to obey. In other words, it is the influence of a right to command which imposes an obligation to obey, as this right results from competence and disposition to give and maintain the best law. Intelligent voluntary beings never act voluntarily without acting from a regard to their own well-being. Instead however, of relying wholly, or even partially on their own wisdom or judgment, in respect to the best mode of action, or the mode in which they ought to act, they may rely partially or even wholly on the decision of superior wisdom and superior goodness. It is true, that the subjects of a moral government may possess such knowledge of the nature and tendency of action on their part, as to know, irrespectively of any decision of the moral governor, that their own highest well-being as well as that of all others can be secured only by conformity to the law of his government. In this way natural good and evil as directly known to result from the nature and tendency of different kinds of action, may concur with the influence of authority to secure their conformity to the law. But in that conformity to law which is secured by the single influence of natural good and evil as motives, there is no recognition of the moral governor's authority. The influence of authority is not the direct influence of natural good and evil reaching the mind through the known nature and tendency of action. It is that influence which results from one's having a right to command by virtue of the superior power, wisdom and goodness, which qualify him to govern in the best manner. So far as this influence reaches moral beings, whether resisted or unresisted by them, they are under the

influence of moral government. Where this influence does not exist, there is nothing which can be called moral government.

Of the truth of the present position, the slightest attention to the subject will satisfy us. If we suppose a parent or a civil ruler to be without that right to command which imposes an obligation to obey, we cannot regard him as having authority, or as administering a moral government--or at most only in pretense. Nor can we suppose one to possess this right and exercise it through the medium of law, without admitting the existence of that which is called a moral government. It is then, this influence--the influence that results from the right to command which imposes an obligation to obey, which is an essential element of moral government. This is the influence of authority.

The nature of this influence will be more manifest if we look at the basis or source of the right, viz., the competence and disposition of one to govern in the best manner. These qualifications vest him with the right to govern, as they furnish or constitute the evidence or proof that he will govern in the best manner, or that his law is the best law, and will be sustained as a decisive rule of action to subjects. Such a governor ought to be obeyed. moral obligation is the binding influence of that necessity, which a moral being is under of performing that action which is decisively proved to be the best action, or to be best fitted to the great end of all action on his part, viz., the highest well-being of all, both of others and of himself. Now the competence and disposition of the moral governor to give and maintain the best law, is decisive proof that the law which he gives is the best law, and that the action which he requires is the best fitted to the great end of all action, and as such is the best and necessary means of the best end. These qualifications of the moral governor therefore, as decisive proof that he will govern in the best manner, become a ground of obligation on the part of subjects to obey his law.

It is true that the subject, in submitting to the influence of authority, acts from a desire of the highest well-being of others and of himself, as truly as he would, were he influenced by the knowledge of the nature and tendency of action irrespectively of the influence of authority. The two influences may and often do coexist. Still, they are different influences. If the nature and tendency of action, as directly apprehended by the mind, or learned by experience, may be one kind of evidence, the character of an infinitely perfect lawgiver may be another kind of evidence that the

action required is the best kind of action. If evidence from both sources exists, then the highest evidence supposable in the case exists. If, however, we suppose the evidence from the character of the lawgiver only exists, this is sufficient and decisive evidence that the action required by his law is the best action, and ought to be done. That this evidence is peculiarly fitted to impress the human mind, when compared with any other, we may have occasion to show hereafter. Be this as it may, the exclusive competence and disposition of the moral governor to give and maintain the best law being fully evinced, constitute sufficient and decisive proof that the law requires the best kind of action. This fact being established, the necessity of the action required to the great end of all action, viz., the highest well-being of all, is also established. This necessity of the action required, results in the obligation of the agent to perform the action. Without the manifest necessity of the action to the great end of all action, nothing can be conceived to be true of it which can bind the agent to its performance. With the necessity of the action to this end, nothing can be conceived to set aside his obligation to its performance. So far therefore, as there is any thing in respect to the character or the relation of a moral governor, which creates obligation to obedience on the part of subjects, it is the manifestation of his competence and disposition to govern in the best manner, as a proof that he will so govern.

In opposition to the view now maintained, the right to govern is supposed by some to rest on other grounds than competence and disposition to govern in the best manner. Thus, the right, in certain cases, is supposed to rest on some peculiar relation. For example, the right of the parent to govern his children, is supposed to rest simply on the relation of the parent. This is obviously mistaking the evidence of the right for the basis of the right. Every such general doctrine or truth as that now referred to, must be determined by some general principle. The general principle, that parents will govern their children better than others will govern them, is justly inferred from the parental relation, and is therefore, the true basis or ground of the parents' right. This is obvious for if we reverse the principle--if we adopt the principle that others than parents will govern children better than parents, the right to govern them would rest in other hands. Again, it is often maintained that the right of a Creator to govern his creatures, rests simply on his relation as their Creator. The error in this case must be obvious to every one who distinguishes this single

relation from the moral character of a Creator. If we suppose him, then, to be a selfish or malignant being, having only the designs of such a being to accomplish by the conduct of his creatures, how could the mere act of creation give him the right to govern? He could not possess even the right to create beings for his own selfish purposes; how then, could submission to the will of such a Creator be the duty of his creatures? It is true that the act of creation may by its effects be supposed to evince the goodness of the Creator, and so become evidence of his qualification to govern in the best manner, and the ground of his rightful authority. But the act of creation may also by its effects be supposed to evince the malignity of the Creator, or to leave his designs and his character in concealment and in doubt. The act of creation does not necessarily involve his goodness. The act of creation therefore, simply considered, cannot be an adequate basis for the right to govern.

To sustain the right of civil jurisdiction, various expedients have been resorted to, all of which confirm the view now maintained. Thus "the divine right of kings" has been a favorite doctrine; and to exhibit and enforce the right to rule, civil rulers have assumed the exalted titles of "sacred majesty," "God's vice-regent," "God's anointed," "God's representative;" have claimed descent from gods, and exacted divine worship, and have pretended to have secret intercourse with some divinity, or to be gods themselves. All this clearly betrays the principle now maintained, as that which in the view of those who govern and of those who are governed, is the true basis of the right to govern.

Some evidently rest the right to govern by law simply on the power to execute its sanctions. This theory obviously places the entire influence of moral government in the influence of natural good and of natural evil, as the one is promised to obedience and the other threatened to disobedience; viewed only as motives to persuade to the one and dissuade from the other. According to this view, might gives right, and the veriest tyrant with power to execute the sanctions of law, combined with the most fell malignity, has a righteous claim for the unqualified submission of his subjects. On this scheme there can be no fixed standard, no permanent and essential elements of right and wrong moral action. All moral distinctions are subverted, and any being having the power, would have the right to fill the universe with misery. This monstrous theory of moral government is the legitimate consequence of

the selfishness of this selfish world, looking only at natural good and evil in the form of legal reward and penalty, as the only motives to secure obedience and prevent disobedience to law. No account is made of the essential element of a moral government, the influence and authority. The right to govern, which results from competence and disposition to govern in the best manner--the right which imposes an obligation to obey, is unknown, and obedience and disobedience to a moral governor as having this right, are impossible.

REMARK.

In view of the nature of rightful authority, how desirable it is that men should be placed under this influence.

LECTURE II: A perfect Moral Government Involves the exercise of authority through the medium of law.

V. A perfect Moral Government Involves the exercise of authority through the medium of law. The nature of such a law. First, It to a decisive rule of action to subjects. Secondly, It must require benevolence as the best kind of action, and must forbid selfishness as the worst kind of action. Viewed In relation to these objects, and to the agent who exercises them, these affections an supreme, intelligent morally free, permanents and predominant

I HAVE said that a moral government is-- I. An influence on moral beings; -- II. That it implies amoral governor; -- III. That it is designed so to control the action of moral beings, as to secure the great end of action on their part; -- IV. That it is the influence of authority. I now proceed to say:

V. That a perfect moral government involves the exercise of authority through the medium of law.

Here the question arises, what is law--the law of a perfect moral government?

Generally speaking, the law of a perfect moral government, is the will of the moral governor concerning the action of his subjects, promulgated as an authoritative and perfect rule of action to them. In this general answer to the question, there would be perhaps a universal agreement in opinion, while in respect to its particular import, there might be diversity.

Hence the question demands an answer in several important particulars. I proceed, then, to say--

That the law of a perfect moral government, is the promulgated will of the moral governor, as a decisive rule of action to his subjects, requiring benevolence on their part as the best kind of action, and as the sum of obedience, forbidding selfishness on their part as the worst kind of action and the sum of disobedience, expressing his preference of the action required to its opposite all things considered, his satisfaction with obedience and with nothing but obedience on the part of subjects, and his highest approbation of obedience and highest disapprobation of disobedience; and including the appropriate sanctions of the moral governor's authority.

This definition of the law of a perfect moral government, I shall attempt to support in the following particular propositions:

1. The law of a perfect moral government is the promulgated will of the moral governor as a decisive rule of action to his subjects. The will of the moral governor must be promulgated, that it may be known by the subject, since there can be no obligation on the part of the latter to obey the will of the former, if it cannot be known. At the same time, the will of the lawgiver being clearly promulgated, ignorance of the law becomes voluntary, and can be no excuse for disobedience. This will must be promulgated as a decisive rule of action to subjects. Beings who have the prerogative of deciding the question of duty for themselves irrespectively of the decision or will of another, are not under law to another. A rule of action propounded to others for consideration, leaving the question of duty wholly to their judgment of the nature and tendency of action, is not a law. Law differs widely from wholesome counsel or good advice; and one of its essential characteristics is, that it is a rule of action, determining what ought to be done. Without this conception of a rule of action, that of law cannot be formed. Law, therefore, instead of leaving the question of duty to the judgment of its subjects, to be founded on other evidence, is an authoritative decision of the question, from which there is no appeal.

This conception of law is founded in the truth of things. The right to command which imposes an obligation to obey, results from competence

and disposition to give and maintain the best law. When a rightful sovereign therefore, in the form of promulgated law decides what the subject ought to do, the right of the subject to rejudge the decision, or to decide for himself, is wholly superseded. Whatever other rights real or imaginary, the subject may be supposed to possess in other circumstances, as a subject of law, he can possess none which is inconsistent with this right of the sovereign. The right to rule vests in him, because its exercise by him is necessary to the general good. As the subject then, can possess no right inconsistent with the general good, so he can possess none inconsistent with that right of the sovereign, which is demanded by the general good. He cannot therefore even raise the question of duty, without usurping a right which he has not--nay more, without invading a right which pertains exclusively to the sovereign -- one of the most sacred and inviolable of all rights, the right of deciding that action or conduct of subjects on which the highest well-being of each and of all depends. To suppose otherwise, is to divest the law of a rightful sovereign of its peculiar and essential characteristic as a rule of action, and to degrade it to the level of mere advice. It is to commit the question of what ought to be done by the subject, to the incompetent judgment and self-will of one who is bound to conform his decision to that of unerring wisdom and goodness. It is to suppose, that the subject of the best law is not bound to obey it, but has a right to disobey it, and to make war on the general good. Law then, the law of a perfect moral government, decides--settles the question of duty on the part of its subjects, by superseding absolutely and wholly the right of decision on their part.

2. The law of a perfect moral government must require benevolence as the best kind of action, and forbid selfishness as the worst kind of action on the part of moral beings,

The general proposition, that benevolence is the best kind of action, and selfishness the worst kind of action conceivable on the part of moral beings, can scarcely be supposed to need the support of formal argument. In this general view of the two kinds of action however, the mind, we think, but imperfectly appreciates the intrinsic worth of the one

as moral worth, and the intrinsic evil of the other as moral evil. A thorough and successful analysis of the essential elements which constitute the one the best, and the other the worst kind of action on the part of moral beings, will, I think, greatly serve to heighten our estimate of the moral worth, excellence, and rectitude of the one, and of the moral evil, pravity, and turpitude of the other, and thus reveal more distinctly to our admiration the attractive lineaments and clustering beauties of the one, and to our abhorrence the repulsive aspect and manifold deformities of the other.

It is proposed then, for the purpose of showing that a perfect moral government must require benevolence, and forbid selfishness on the part of its subjects, to show, by unfolding some of the essential elements of these only two kinds of moral action, that the one is the best and the other the worst kind of action conceivable on the part of a moral being, inasmuch as one is perfectly or in the highest degree fitted to prevent the highest misery, and to produce the highest wellbeing of all other sentient beings, and of the agent himself; and the other is perfectly or in the highest degree fitted to prevent the highest well-being, and to produce the highest misery of all other sentient beings, and of the agent himself.

I propose to consider these different acts of a moral being:

- (1.) As they are related to other sentient beings than the agent; and,
- (2.) As they are related to the agent himself.

Let us, then, contemplate these acts --

- (1.) As they are related to other sentient beings than the agent.

I here remark --

In the first place, that each of these acts is a supreme affection; in other words, it is an elective preference of its object as supreme. By this, I mean to distinguish each of these, acts, not only from the other characteristics above specified, and from all involuntary or constitutional preferences, but even from all subordinate and executive preferences which are voluntary or elective.

Benevolence then, as the act of a moral being is an elective preference

of the highest well-being of all other sentient beings as his supreme object. Selfishness, as the act of a moral being, is an elective preference of the world, as his supreme object. To explain further, every elective preference of an object as supreme, is a choice between those objects and those only which can come into competition as objects of election or choice, and also a preference of every object which is implied in or necessary to the existence of the supreme object. Now, with the object of the benevolent preference, viz., the highest good of all other sentient beings, the highest good of the agent can never come into competition as an object of election or choice, for the highest well-being of the agent depends on the highest well-being, or rather on his choice of the highest well-being of all other beings. But with the exception of his own highest well-being, and with what is necessary to or involved in it (e.g., his own virtue which cannot be an object of choice,) every other good to the agent, including the non-existence of evil in many forms, even all worldly good can come into competition with the highest well-being of all other beings as an object of preference. The benevolent preference then, is not, and cannot be a preference to the highest well-being of all other beings, to the agent's own highest well-being, nor of his own highest well-being to the highest well-being of all other beings. It is a preference of the highest well-being of all other beings, to all other good, including the non-existence of all evil, which can come into competition with their highest well-being as an object of choice. In this preference therefore, the agent prefers the highest well-being of all other beings to any and every good, including the non-existence of all evil, which can be preferred by him to their highest well-being. It is, of course, not indeed an uninterested, but a disinterested affection, it being its true nature and tendency as a benevolent preference, to sacrifice all good, and to submit to and incur all evil, on his part, which can be necessary to secure the highest well-being of all other beings. Nor does it stop here. A moral being, in preferring the highest well-being of all other sentient beings as his supreme object, prefers every thing to its opposite, which is necessary to or implied in the existence of this object of his preference. Particularly he prefers to its opposite, every thing in their condition and circumstances which is necessary to the existence of this object, especially the perfect virtue of all other moral beings, as the known necessary means of their highest well-being. He also prefers to their opposites, the non-existence of the highest misery, and of all misery or unhappiness on the part of all others, with the non-existence of all causes and means of these evils; especially

he thus prefers the non-existence of the vice or wickedness of all other moral beings, as the cause or means of their highest misery. Thus we see the perfect adaptation of benevolence, considered as an elective preference of the highest well-being of all other beings as supreme, to secure this object, unclogged by any regard of the agent to his own highest well-being, and to any less happiness on his part, and involving a preference to its opposite of every thing else which can be necessary to, or implied in the existence of the object of his preference, the highest well-being of all other sentient beings.

We shall now see, that from the nature of selfishness as an elective preference of its object as supreme, the facts are far otherwise. With the object of the selfish preference, viz., the world, as the supreme object, the highest well-being of the agent, the highest well-being of all other sentient beings, and the non-existence of the highest misery of all such beings, are necessarily in competition as objects of choice. The agent in preferring the world as his supreme object, necessarily prefers the non-existence of his own highest well-being to the non-existence of the highest well-being, and the existence of the highest misery of all other sentient beings, to the absence or non-existence of the object of his selfish preference. Nor is this all. A moral being in preferring the world as his supreme object, necessarily prefers every thin, else to its opposite, which can be necessary to, or implied in the attainment of his supreme object. He therefore prefers to its opposite every thing in the condition and circumstances of all other sentient beings, which can be necessary to the attainment of his object; particularly the non-existence of the perfect virtue, and the existence of the perfect vice or wickedness of all other moral beings, together with the non-existence of all other causes or means of their happiness, and the existence of all other causes or means of their unhappiness or misery, to the absence, or non-existence of his supreme object. It is of course the true tendency of the selfish preference on the part of a moral being, to destroy all good--all happiness and the means of it, and to produce all evil--all misery and the means of it --on the part of all other sentient beings, which may be necessary to secure the object of the preference.

This view of selfishness as a principle of action on the part of a moral being, is abundantly recognized in the language of common life, particularly in that of the Scriptures. (Vid. JAS. iv. 4.) It places its object--the world--above every other object in its affections; and will therefore destroy the highest good and produce the highest misery of all other beings, if necessary to the accomplishment of its object. Though it may not always reveal itself in the form of malice or hate, still it lives and acts in the mind with constant and reckless neglect and contempt, and therefore with practical opposition and hostility to all other good than its own object. It is, of course, as a principle of action, nothing but a principle of malevolence, in the only true and essential form of malevolence. Such is it in its essential nature; nor is it less odious and destructive because, though it assume not the mere terrific form of infuriate malice or hate in its overt doings, it carries on its work with heartless indifference and open scorn for the highest good, and the highest misery of all other beings.

Thus, each of these two kinds of moral action--benevolence and selfishness--considered simply as an elective preference of its object as supreme, places that object in choice, in affection and in purpose, above every other object, which call come into competition with it as an object to be sought. It involves, of course, an unqualified determination full purpose of heart to sacrifice any good, the sacrifice of which, and to produce any evil, the production of which, may be necessary for the accomplishment of its object. At the same time, no state of mind on the part of a moral being is of such sure and infallible tendency as a cause, to go out into the full production of its effect, as the elective preference of an object as supreme. Nor does a moral being aim at or seek any object as supreme, except in either the benevolent or the selfish preference. All other acts of will, on the part of such a being fix on their objects in subservience to the accomplishment of his supreme object; and therefore terminate in these objects. It is only in the elective preference of an object as supreme, that a moral being so fixes his will upon, and so directs his affections to that object--so concentrates thought, and desire, and feeling upon it, as to be unqualifiedly willing--even fully determined, to sacrifice any and every good, and to incur any and every evil which may be necessary to the attainment of that object. But this he does in each elective preference of an object as supreme, Benevolence then, as an

elective preference of its object as supreme, is in one respect the action and the only action of a moral being, which is perfectly fitted to prevent the highest misery, and in its stead, to produce the highest well-being of all other sentient beings; and selfishness, as an elective preference of its object as supreme, is, in one respect, the action and the only action of a moral being, which is perfectly fitted to prevent the highest well-being, and to produce the highest misery of all other sentient beings. Benevolence, then, as an elective act, and as related to other beings, is the best kind of action in this respect, and selfishness as an elective act, and as related to other beings, is in this respect, the worst kind of action conceivable on the part of a moral being.

I remark --

In the second place; that each of these moral acts is an intelligent preference of its object as supreme. By this, I mean, that in each of these elective preferences, the mind acts with an intellectual apprehension of the objects of its choice. In either case, the will and the affections are fixed on an object as supreme, not with ignorance, but with knowledge; not amid the darkness of error, but under the light of truth. The agent, whether he acts for weal or for woe, knows what he is doing. He has apprehended the two great objects of moral choice, their nature, relations and tendencies. All that knowledge or truth can do, is done. He knows the object at which he aims, in distinction from that at which he does not aim. The end at which he aims--the end to be accomplished, is clearly to be distinguished from the end not to be accomplished; and is ever held in distinct vision before him. Thus every conceivable security is furnished, that his supreme object will never be mistaken; that his supreme object, or any thing involved in or necessary to its existence, will not be forgotten or lost sight of; nor in any way neglected by being unthought of or out of mind; nor that the opposite object will be sought in its stead. What higher or more invaluable security than this, can be given, that the benevolent preference will act for, and thus accomplish its object--and what higher or more fearful security than this, that the selfish preference will act for, and thus secure its object? How salutary and excellent the intellectual element in the one; how destructive and fatal the same element in the

other! And further--by this intellectual element -- this adequate, and constant, and sure apprehension of the object of the preference, the mind is prepared to decide at once, to a vast extent, with its prior knowledge of subordinate, executive actions, the fitness of such action to promote or to defeat its supreme object. How is this decision, in a vast majority of cases, made with the quickness of instinct; and on this account, is the fitness of the benevolent preference to good, and the fitness of the selfish preference to evil, increased! Thus it may be said, that all that is valuable in being wise to do good, is combined in the one, and all that is destructive in being wise to do evil, is combined in the other, as each is an intelligent preference. Indeed, were it not so, the mind could have no supreme object or end. It would have no steady aim, and could be guided by nothing. It would be like a ship in the darkest tempest, without helm or compass; while this constant intellectual apprehension and aim clears away every cloud, lights up the star of direction, and like, the unerring needle, ascertains and guides the course. Being thus an intelligent act -- combining the perfect employment of the intellect for its own purpose, how is the fitness of each moral preference to secure its object, perfected in another respect? It is the benignant tendency and fitness of the benevolent preference, active with unqualified and unerring aim for its object in the light of truth; and it is the malignant tendency and fitness of the selfish preference, active with unqualified and unerring aim for its object, under the same light. One is the act of a moral being, with the knowledge of good and evil, aiming to prevent misery, even the highest misery and to produce the highest good of all other beings; the other is the act of a moral being with the knowledge of good and evil, aiming to destroy the highest good, and to produce the highest misery of all other beings! As intelligent action then, benevolence, in another respect, is the best kind of action, and selfishness the worst kind of action conceivable on the part of a moral being.

I remark --

In the third place, that each of the elective preferences under consideration, is a morally free action. A moral being has power to make either of these preferences in the circumstances in which he acts, instead

of the other; and is also under an absolute necessity of making the one or the other. By making one therefore, he prevents the other in the only possible way of preventing it. Now each of these elective preferences has its peculiar tendency--the one its beneficial tendency, the other its destructive tendency--considered simply as an elective preference of its object as supreme; and so it would be, though the actual opposite of each preference were nothing more than its own non-existence. But the actual opposite of each is not its own non-existence. A morally free being is not merely Under the necessity of making one of these preferences or not making it, that is, of making one or making no preference. If he does not make the one, he does and must make the other. Make which he may, he does more than make it--he prevents the opposite preference, which otherwise must be made. Moral agency must serve one of two masters, when by serving one his designs are accomplished, while the same service, preventing all service to the other, defeats his designs.

In this view, free agency is the grand, not to say the most momentous element in the nature of a moral being, as related to the happiness and misery of other beings. By giving existence to one positive cause, whether of immense good or immense evil to them--to one of which such a being must give existence--he prevents the other. If a free moral agent makes the benevolent preference, he not only gives existence to a positive cause of immense good to all other beings, but in so doing he prevents the selfish preference in its stead, and so prevents a positive cause fitted to destroy all happiness, and to produce the highest misery of all other beings. If such a being makes the selfish preference, he not only gives existence to a cause of immense evil to other beings, but in so doing he prevents the benevolent preference in its stead, and so prevents a cause fitted to prevent all misery, and to produce the highest well-being of all other beings.

We are familiar with the precept, "Cease to do evil, and learn to do well." Now, were a moral being merely to cease to do evil, the simple act of ceasing from another action so fitted to destroy happiness, and to produce misery, would possess high worth and excellence. In like manner, great pravity and turpitude would pertain to the simple act of

ceasing to do well. But, acting morally, he can no more cease to do evil, without doing well, than darkness can cease without light; and he can no more cease to do well, without doing evil, than light can cease without darkness. There is for a moral being, no neutral ground to stand on. A moral being must be good, or he must be wicked. He must be for the greatest good, or against it. He must be benevolent or he must be selfish. Such is the nature of free moral agency, that he must prevent himself from being the one by being the other; that by becoming in principle an angel of mercy, he must prevent himself from becoming in principle a demon in malignity; and by becoming in principle a demon of malignity, he must prevent himself from becoming in principle an angel of mercy. In this respect then, what worth and excellence in the one kind of action, what pravity and turpitude in the other! Benevolence, on the part of a moral being, prevents selfishness, with all its fitness to cause ruin and wretchedness and woe to all other beings. Selfishness, on the part of a moral being, prevents benevolence, with its fitness to prevent the highest misery, and to secure the highest good of all other beings. What else than benevolence can prevent a cause of so much evil? What else than selfishness can prevent a cause of so much good? As morally free action then, viewed as related in this respect to the happiness and misery of other beings, benevolence is the best kind of action, and selfishness is the worst kind of action conceivable on the part of a moral being.

I remark --

In the fourth place, that each of the elective preferences of which 1. speak, is a permanent state of mind. By this I do not mean that it is immutable, nor that it never changes; but that it remains in all practical doings. Indeed, when once formed, it never changes, nor can change, unless the mind changes de novo between the two great objects of moral choice. This the mind is exceedingly unapt to do, chiefly because the preference of an object as supreme, has a peculiar tendency to perpetuate itself, by confining thought and feeling to its object, and engrossing the whole mind with it. It thus strengthens feeling, and strengthens itself, and becomes permanent, so far as it can be, with a physical possibility and yet with the lowest probability of change. It is with

these qualifications to be viewed as an abiding or fixed, as opposed to a fitful or fluctuating state of mind. As soon as it exists, and without use or custom, it is a supreme affection fixed on its object as the chief good--as the portion of the soul and is thus in its very beginning what philosophers have called it--a habit of the mind--in one form of it, the _____ of Pythagoras, or "the habit of what ought to be." It is formed to be permanent--to be engrossed with and ever intent on its object--to be ever present in the mind in relation to its object, that its object may never be disregarded, nor fail to be attained for want of constancy or fixedness of affection. Here then, in the permanency of the supreme elective preference of a moral being, we have another element of its fitness to secure its object. Without this element or characteristic, there could be no such thing as moral character, the most momentous fact in respect to moral beings, nor any manifestations of character in practical doings--none, of course, in its results of good and evil. All, in principle, would be unfixed, fitful, and fluctuating--at most an incessant series of transitions from one Supreme affection or elective preference to the other. Neither would abide long enough to produce results. An essential element of moral character, whether good or bad, would be utterly wanting, because an essential element of fitness to either good or bad results would be utterly wanting. A constant fluctuation, as opposed to permanency in these preferences, would render that which has the highest conceivable worth utterly worthless, and that which is in the highest conceivable degree injurious, utterly harmless. The absolute nature of each might remain the same; but neither having a relative nature, or sustaining any relation to any being or thing, could be either useful or injurious, either good or evil, either right or wrong. Whatever be supposed in opposition to permanence in these preferences, so far as it is supposed, it annihilates all the good of the one, and all the evil of the other; for so far it annihilates its existence, while with the element of permanence in each, there is the continuance of all that is good, useful or right, in the one, and all that is evil, injurious or wrong, in the other. How then, is the peculiar and exclusive fitness of the benevolent preference to prevent the highest misery, and to promote the highest good of all other sentient beings perfected by its permanency in the mind of the agent? How, by the same element of the selfish preference, is disclosed its peculiar and exclusive fitness to destroy the highest good, and to produce the highest misery of all other beings? Who does not see in the permanency of the benevolent principle a signal worth and excellence to

approve and admire; and in the same characteristic of the selfish principle, a signal deformity and odiousness to disapprove and abhor? The benevolent preference once formed by a moral being partakes as it were of his own immortality, and still lives and still acts to carry out its own blessed issues forever. The selfish preference formed by the same being, alike ceaseless in its activity and duration, remains to accomplish its results in wretchedness and woe forever. Who shall measure the worth of _permanence in the one, and the fearfulness of permanence in the other? The one, like the principle of self-preservation, which every moment guards and perpetuates life and its blessings, is ever present to guard and promote the highest well-being of a sentient universe; the other, alike permanent and effective, is ever present to devastate and make wretched that universe. As permanent action then, and viewed in relation to the happiness and misery of all other beings, benevolence is the best kind of action, and selfishness is the worst kind of action conceivable on the part of a moral being.

I remark --

In the fifth place, that each of the elective preferences under consideration, is a predominant act or state of the mind. I call it predominant, as it controls and directs all other action of the being in subservience to the accomplishment of its end or object. Fixed on its object or end as supreme, its direct and peculiar tendency is, whether the object be good or bad, to employ every power of the agent in subordinate action for the accomplishment of its object. It brings into requisition the whole inner and outer man, the intellect, susceptibility, will, and heart, in all the various forms of thought, feeling, affection, volition, with all the powers, of executive action, and all in subservience to the supreme object. The labors, the toils, and the hardships of self-denial in one case, are made easy and light by a willing mind and a ready hand, while in the other, to invade and destroy the rights, the peace, the happiness of others, is a work of alacrity and exultation. Thus an apostle suffers the loss of all things, and the hero desolates kingdoms; and each is a cheerful martyr to his cause. Thus the supreme preference, in its true tendency, takes absolute dominion in the soul, and reigns with controlling

sway over the entire productive energy of the agent.

While such is the peculiar and exclusive characteristic of the benevolent and selfish preference, every moral being is doomed by a necessity of nature, to place himself under the absolute dominion and control of the one or the other of these preferences. It is an ordinance of his very being, that he cannot serve both these masters, and must serve one. The preference of one of the only two objects of moral choice, excludes the other from all thought except to oppose and resist it, and therefore shuts off all controlling influence from it as an object to be attained, as it were by its utter annihilation, and so consecrates his whole being to the attainment of the supreme object. He thinks, he feels, he wills, he acts; he lives, or as the case may be, he dies for it. Such is the nature--such the tendency of each of the two great moral principles or preferences of a moral being, as a predominant principle. What now is it, as the benevolent--what as the selfish principle in its relation to the happiness and misery of other beings? What is it in a being, whose exaltation in the scale of being likens him to his Maker, in the nature and greatness of powers to produce results in happiness and misery? What is it for a being, like an archangel strong--strong in intellect, in emotion, in will, in executive power, to be under the constant and entire dominion of perfect benevolence; or what instead, to be under the constant and absolute dominion of unqualified selfishness! In the one case, what--high devisings and plans of wisdom, what desires and affections of heart absorbed and glowing with their object--what intensity and strength of firm resolve, what ceaseless activity of all productive energies, devoted to the prevention of the highest misery and the production of the highest well-being of all! In the other case, what a like devotion of the same exalted powers, to the destruction of the highest well-being, and the production of the highest misery of all! Look now on the actual results as real, and learn the benignant dominion of benevolence--the terrific dominion of selfishness. Survey the broad field of eternity, cheered, and brightened, and blessed with the fruits and harvests of the joyous activities of reigning benevolence; and then, the same field made desolate, and dark, and dead in the woes of reigning selfishness. See in the one principle the brightest image of that infinite uncreated excellence, that makes heaven; see in the other the very spirit that would convert all into the dark world of hell. Measure now, in relation to other beings, the perfect fitness of the one to good, and the perfect fitness of the other to

evil, as the predominant and reigning principle of a moral being. What so manifest in the form of absolute knowledge, as that benevolence is the best, and selfishness the worst kind of action which, on the part of such beings can be conceived.

I now proceed, as I proposed, to consider --

(2.) As they are related to the agent himself.

The nature of benevolence, and of selfishness, as the one is related to the happiness, and the other to the misery of the agent.

My design is to show, that benevolence on the part of a moral being is perfectly fitted to give him the highest happiness of which he is capable from action; and that selfishness is perfectly fitted to give him the highest misery of which he is capable from action.

These things will appear, if we consider some of the essential characteristics of each of these kinds of action.

In the first place; benevolence on the part of a moral being is perfectly fitted to secure to him the highest happiness, and selfishness the highest misery, of which he is capable from the objects of action. By the object of action I mean all that which a moral being in the elective preference of his supreme object, may be truly said to will or choose, that is, the object itself and the necessary means of obtaining it. With this explanation of the object of action in view, I proceed to show that --

Benevolence on the part of a moral being is perfectly fitted to secure to him the highest happiness of which he is capable from any object of action. This may be shown thus: there is no conceivable object of action

from which a moral being is capable of deriving so much happiness, as from the highest happiness of all other beings, including what is necessarily involved in the existence of this object of preference, particularly the non-existence of the highest misery of all other sentient beings, and the perfect virtue of all other moral beings. But benevolence is the action and the only action on the part of a moral being, which is perfectly fitted to secure this object or end of action. Benevolence therefore is the action and only action on the part of a moral being, which is perfectly fitted to secure to him the highest happiness of which he is capable from any object of action. Now the necessary and perfect means of a good end, has all the worth or value of the end itself. Benevolence then, on the part, of a moral being, as the necessary and perfect means of the highest well-being of all other beings, and as such the necessary and perfect means of the highest happiness to himself, of which he is capable from any object of action, has all the worth or value to him of his highest happiness from any object of action. No equal worth or value to a moral being can be conceived to pertain to any other action, on account of its relation to the object of action. Or thus: while action on the part of a moral being, which would have no object of worth or value to him, could itself have no worth or value to him, the worth or value of action on the part of such a being to him is at least equal to the worth or value to him of its object; and the worth or value to him of its object, is equal to the worth or value of the happiness of which he is capable from the object of action. In the present case, the action is benevolence; and the happiness of which the agent is capable from the object or end of the action, is the highest of which he is capable from any object or end of action. Benevolence therefore, has to him a worth or excellence equal to that of the highest happiness which he can derive from any object or end of action, and has, of course, the highest worth or value to him, compared with any action conceivable on his part, in relation to the object or end of action.

The same thing will appear, if we consider more particularly the import of the word good, or what it is that constitutes worth, value, excellence. The goodness, or the worth, or the value, or the excellence of a thing, is not the absolute nature, but the relative nature of that of which it is the predicate; or, more particularly, it is the real nature of that of which it is

predicated, as related to sentient being. Even happiness itself is not good, or has no worth or value, except as related to a sentient being who can enjoy it. Were there no being capable of happiness, and could there in the nature of things be no such being, nothing could be good, nothing could possess worth, value, or excellence; for there could be neither happiness, nor the means of happiness, nor yet even the idea or notion of either. Nothing is good but happiness and the means of happiness, including the absence of misery and the means of its absence. Were every thing as it is--were God and his vast creation as they are, with the single exception of all capacity of happiness and all possibility of such capacity all would be utterly worthless. All the worth or value of man or of any other moral being, consists in his capacity of happiness and of that self-active nature which qualifies him to produce happiness to other beings and to himself. All the worth, or value, or goodness, or excellence, which pertains to action on the part of a moral being, is its fitness or adaptation to produce these results. The best kind of action, therefore, on his part, is that which is exclusively and perfectly fitted to produce the highest happiness of others, and his own highest happiness. This kind of action in its relation to the happiness of others, and its relation at least in one respect, to the happiness; of the agent himself, is benevolence or benevolent action. This kind of action is good, not simply as it is perfectly fitted to produce the highest happiness of all other beings, but also as by being thus fitted to produce the highest happiness of all other beings, it is perfectly fitted to produce the highest happiness of the agent, of which he is capable from any object or end of action. Its being perfectly fitted to produce the highest happiness of all other beings, constitutes its worth or value to them, and it is the same fitness on which the highest happiness of the agent in the case depends, and which constitutes, in one respect, the worth or value of the action to him; for his highest happiness, so far as it depends on the objects of action, depends on the object of this action, and so depends on the action itself, as exclusively and perfectly fitted to produce the object on which the highest happiness to himself, of which he is capable from any object of action, depends. While therefore, in the manner explained, the worth or value of the action to the agent himself, in one respect, essentially depends on or consists in the relation of the action to the highest happiness of all other beings, it also depends on the relation of the action to his own happiness. Were the agent wholly unsusceptible to happiness from the happiness of others, and as, therefore, he must be wholly indifferent to their happiness, he must be

wholly indifferent to benevolence on his own part as the means of their happiness. Benevolence in such a case could possess no worth or value to him, either directly or indirectly. But being capable of higher happiness from the highest happiness of all other beings than from any other object of action, and benevolence being the only action perfectly fitted to secure the highest happiness of all other beings, it is perfectly fitted to secure to him the highest happiness of which he is capable from any object of action; and of course, the highest happiness of which he is capable from any action on account of its relation to the object of action.

And now, what is the worth or value of this kind of action on the part of a moral being to himself? It is not identical with the worth to him of the highest happiness of all other beings, or with the worth to him of his own happiness from their happiness. But the worth of the action to him is equal to the worth to him of either the highest happiness of all other beings, or of his own happiness from their highest happiness. The worth to him of the highest happiness of all other beings, is its fitness to give him the highest happiness of which he is capable from any object of action; and the worth to him of benevolent action is its perfect and exclusive fitness to produce the highest happiness of all other beings, and herein its perfect fitness to secure to him the highest happiness of which he is capable from any object of action.

Nor is it necessary to the worth or value of benevolence on the part of a moral being, that the highest happiness of all other beings, or that his own happiness as the direct effect of this object actually exist; for the action has the same nature the same fitness to produce these results, whether they are actually produced or not. Nor in estimating the worth of benevolence to the agent are we to view him as under the controlling dominion of the selfish principle, when his susceptibilities to the happiness of others, and to his own happiness from it are rendered dormant and dead by the influence of that principle. But we are to view the mind in the perfect exercise of its powers, especially when its susceptibilities to happiness, in the full play of their perfect activity, give their perfect results. To appreciate then, the worth or value of benevolence on the part of a moral being to himself, we must measure

the worth or value of that happiness which such a being in the perfect use of his high powers and capacities, would derive from the non-existence of the highest misery, and the existence of the highest happiness of all other beings, as the actual and true product of his own action. What a source of happiness to a moral being were such an object. What but comparative insignificance and vanity were happiness from the only other object of action--the world--on the part of such a being. What other action on his part can afford him such happiness from the object of action, and possess in this respect such worth or value to him as that which should prevent the highest misery, and produce the highest blessedness of God and of his sentient creation. What worth, what excellence, would such a scene of moral beauty and magnificence, with all its blessedness, give to the action which was its true and proper cause.

I now proceed to say, that --

Selfishness on the part of a moral being is perfectly fitted to secure to him the highest misery of which he is capable from any object or end of action. There is no conceivable object or end of action on the part of a moral being, from which he is capable of deriving so much misery, as from the highest misery of all other beings, including what is necessarily involved in the object of his preference; particularly, the non-existence of the highest happiness of all other beings, and the perfect vice or wickedness of all other moral beings. Selfishness, as we have seen, is the action and the only action of a moral being, which is perfectly fitted to secure this object, or this result of action, to other beings. Selfishness therefore is the action, and the only action on his part, which is perfectly fitted to secure to him the highest misery of which he is capable from any object or end of action. Now the necessary and perfect means of a bad end, is as bad--as evil--as is the end itself, to the being whose end it is. Selfishness then, on the part of a moral being, as the only and perfect means of the highest misery of all other beings, with all that is involved in this evil, and as such a means, the only and perfect means of the highest misery of which he is capable from any object or end of action, is as great an evil to him, as is the object or end itself, or as is his own highest

misery from any object or end of action.

The remarks already made respecting the word good, *mutatis mutandis*, apply to the word evil. The word evil, like the word good, is a relative term; that is, it denotes the nature of that of which it is a predicate, as related to sentient being. Even misery or suffering is evil only as related to a sentient being, who can experience or feel it. Nothing is evil but misery or suffering, and the means of it, including the absence of happiness and the means of its absence. All the evil which pertains to action on the part of a moral being, is its fitness or adaptation to produce misery or suffering, to other beings and to himself. The worst kind of action therefore on the part of a moral being, is that which is exclusively and perfectly fitted to produce the highest misery of all other beings, and his own highest misery. This kind of action in its relation to the misery of others, and in its relation at least in one respect to the misery of the agent himself, is selfishness. This kind of action is evil, not simply as it is perfectly fitted to produce the highest misery of all other beings, but also, as being on account of this very fitness, or in this very fitness, perfectly fitted to produce the highest misery of the agent, of which he is capable from any object or end of action. While therefore the evil nature of the action as an evil to the agent, depends on its relation to the highest misery of others, it also depends on the relation of the action to himself. Were the agent entirely unsusceptible to misery from the misery of others, and therefore necessarily entirely indifferent to their misery, he must also be utterly indifferent to selfishness on his own part as the means of their misery. Selfishness on his part, in such a case, could be no evil to him. It is obvious then, that one essential element of the evil of selfishness to the agent, is its perfect fitness to produce the highest misery of all other beings, and in this respect, or on this very account, its perfect fitness to give him the highest misery of which he is capable from any object or end of action; and of course the highest misery of which he is capable from any action, on account of its relation to the object or end of action.

The evil of this kind of action to the agent is equal either to the evil to him of the highest misery of all other beings, or to the evil to him of his own

misery from their highest misery. Nor is it necessary to the intrinsic evil of the action, that the actual results in misery to others or to himself actually exist. But to appreciate the evil to himself of selfishness on the part of a moral being, we must measure the evil of that misery which such a being in the perfect unperverted action of his powers and capacities, would derive from the non-existence of the highest happiness, and the existence of the highest misery of all other beings, as the actual product of his own action. What a source of misery to such a being, were such an object or end of action fully accomplished! What other action on his part can bring to him so much misery from the object of action, and in this respect, be so great an evil to him, as that action which should destroy the highest blessedness of this sentient universe, and fill it with woe?

Thus it appears, that benevolence on the part of a moral being is perfectly fitted to secure to him the highest happiness, and selfishness, the highest misery, of which he is capable from the objects or ends of action. Benevolence then, as related in this respect to the agent's own happiness, is to him the best kind of action, and selfishness as related in this respect to the misery of the agent, is to him the worst kind of action.

I remark --

In the second place; that benevolence on the part of a moral being is perfectly fitted to afford him the highest happiness, and selfishness, the highest misery, of which he is capable from any action, as each is intelligent action. This characteristic or element of the two kinds of action in its relation to the happiness and misery of all other beings than the agent, we have already considered. We now contemplate it in its relation to the happiness and misery of the agent himself. Next in degree to that happiness or that misery of which the mind is capable from the action of the will and the heart, are that happiness and that misery of which it is capable from the action of the intellect in the form of knowledge. This happiness and this misery on the part of a moral being, depend on what is known, or on the objects of knowledge, and the use made of it. Now a moral being, in all moral action, whether he acts for good or for evil, for

weal or for woe, acts intelligently. Whatever he does--whatever object he aims at, whatever results he produces, he acts not in ignorance, not under mistake, not With doubt, but with knowledge. The two great objects or ends of all moral action are known--known in their nature, known in their difference, known in all their vastness, as the highest happiness, and the highest misery of all sentient being. The will, the heart, the entire susceptibility, and productive energy the whole man, acts not in the darkness of ignorance or error, but in the light of truth. In respect to the most momentous agency in the universe of causes, moral action, he knows what is true, what is false, what is good, what is evil, according to the eternal and immutable nature of things. Act as he may, he acts with a just and adequate view and comprehension of all that need be known, that the great end of all being--of all existence may be accomplished or be defeated. And now what is such knowledge to such a being--what, if he acts morally right; what, if he acts morally wrong. Knowledge, how delightful, joyous, in the one case--how exquisitely painful in the other! How diverse these acts, with the same results, done in the darkness and blind stupidity of mere physical agencies or causes! This perfect knowledge with right moral action--such knowledge rightly used, applied, employed for its true end, we see at once is the light of life to the soul. The knowledge of all that can bless and of all that can curse a sentient universe knowledge of all that ought to be and ought not to be, with knowledge, that all on his part which ought to be is--such knowledge is the constant associate of perfect benevolence in a moral being--in its absolute certainty, its clear and cloudless effulgence, enlightening, directing, quickening all his spiritual activities to their true result in the perfect blessedness of all who shall value its objects, who shall measure its extent, who unfold its perfection, who utter its joys! A moral being, perfect, immortal, ever living, ever acting under the approving eye of Omniscience, and "seeing as he is seen, and knowing as he is known!"

What now, is such knowledge to a moral being of the opposite character? Knowledge consciously, deliberately, and willful resisted, hated, perverted--knowledge, while it excludes all ignorance that might palliate guilt or mitigate its pangs, reveals the full measure of both. Knowledge, when ignorance were bliss--light a thousand-fold more terrific than deepest darkness--light revealing a moral being to himself in the work of

destroying all good, and producing all evil! What degradation in rank, what perversion of faculties, what frustration of the high end of his being, what ruin to others, what self-ruin--himself knowing all, and yet doing all--living, acting amid the wreck and wretchedness of his own work, and knowing all only to be wretched in all he knows!

I remark --

In the third place, that another element of fitness in each of the two kinds of action specified, to secure its result to the agent, is that it is his own action. The same action duly contemplated by one who is not its author, would afford him as the action were good or bad, a high degree of pleasure or a high degree of pain. But how would this pleasure or pain be augmented were the action his own! The action has now a new element. It is his action. The mere fact, that that which gives us pleasure or pain is ours, and more especially that it is ours by production or authorship, is a source of a high, distinct and peculiar pleasure or pain. We value happiness, or we value natural beauty or excellence the more because it is our own; and we abhor misery, or we abhor natural deformity or worthlessness the more because it is our own. In respect to an action or work which is our own, which has high worth or excellence, the fact is more striking and obvious. Who that has read with pleasure and learned to appreciate Milton's "Paradise Lost," would not be aware of a new and peculiar pleasure, were that immortal poem the product of his own genius? In view then of an action characterized by such unparalleled worth and excellence as perfect benevolence on the part of a moral being, an action perfectly fitted to prevent the highest misery, and to produce the highest happiness of all other beings, perfectly fitted to please and bless God and his sentient creation--to say, "I have done it," must be a source of happiness, which in this respect, can have no parallel, as the effect of any or all other action conceivable. For a being capable of this happiness, to lose it, how great the loss; to secure it and perpetuate it in the perfect exercise of his exalted powers forever, what a possession for immortality!

On the contrary, the opposite action of a moral being, for the same reason, is in a high degree painful. It is his own action. No one can duly contemplate such action in its fearful and fell malignity, even as the act of another being, without a painful, revolting abhorrence. How then, must the painfulness of this emotion be augmented when the action is his own. The action has now another element. It is his action, and the emotion is not mere abhorrence, but it is self-abhorrence, with that oppressive painfulness which admits of no alleviation. Were it but the act of another, that would afford sensible relief. But the whole weight and burden of authorship fall on him. The destruction of the highest happiness, and the production of the highest misery forevermore, is the measure of the evil, of the turpitude of his own act. It is his act, which can never be undone; or rather, in view of its remediless result, it is his act being done forever, and therefore, with the ruin ever before him, he sees himself the continued perpetrator of this deed of death. In view of such an act--such a work, to be obliged to say, "I have done it"--this is one element of that unqualified self-abhorrence which completes the misery of a moral being, on account of wrong moral action. What an inheritance were this, when apart alone, in the reflective solitude of eternity!

I remark --

In the fourth place, that another element in each kind of moral action, is that it is done with moral liberty. An intelligent agent, we may suppose, would reflect on a necessary action having the same relations to the happiness and misery of other beings as a free action, with emotions of pleasure in the one case, and of pain in the other. But how would the pleasure in the one case, and the pain in the other be heightened in view of the action, as done with power to do the opposite in its stead--done, when otherwise the opposite must be done--done, when do which he may, he does more, he avoids doing and so prevents the opposite action. What a determination then, is that of free-will in moral action! We all know how moral liberty burdens the soul with moral responsibility. If it discharge that responsibility, what joy and triumph it finds in so doing! If it violates it, how the violation remains to oppress and crush the spirit! What power of life and death to the soul, in moral liberty! Wherefore is

this? It is that moral liberty, compared with what would be without it, in one case doubles the happiness, and in the other doubles the misery, of which the agent is capable from action as it is related to its objects.

Consider this in respect to benevolence or benevolent action. Either of two positive actions--the one with its tendency to the highest conceivable good, or the other with its tendency to the highest conceivable evil of other beings, is possible to the agent. The action in respect to the objects of action, is elective; and determines one of these great issues of action, and so prevents the other. The agent is under the absolute necessity of doing one positive action or the other positive action; and when he can do either instead of the other, does that which in its true tendency blesses all, and in so doing prevents the doing of that which in its true tendency curses all. His therefore, must be the twofold joy of this twofold achievement. And is there then no peculiar joy in avoiding and so preventing the evil in such a case? Who does not know the joy of escaping death, when life and death are placed in an even balance? And is there no peculiar joy, when right and wrong moral action with their respective tendencies and results are thus poised on moral liberty, in doing the right when otherwise the wrong would and must be done? What a deliverance from evil is thus effected, in the accomplishment of good! What a sublime power in a moral being is the will acting right, when otherwise it must act wrong! Look through heaven and earth, what other power is sublime--what other is there to admire--in what other to rejoice! Power necessitated to act with a sure result for the highest happiness or for the highest misery of all, and free to act for either instead of the other, and acting right! How is the conscious, joy of acting right heightened by the conscious and equal joy of not acting wrong--becoming the twofold joy, that of action perfectly fitted to bless, and that of avoiding action perfectly fitted to curse a sentient universe! It is the moral liberty of action, giving to the self-complacency of virtue, a signal, unsurpassed element of joy--even the twofold blessedness within, of electively preventing a hell and creating a heaven without. What other action conceivable can afford such happiness to a moral being?

Let us now briefly contemplate selfishness or selfish action as done in the

exercise of moral liberty. Here the same element so benign in benevolent action, becomes only a fearful and deadly evil. In this kind of action there is also a twofold performance, involving a twofold issue. How great the evil, in evil done and in good prevented. The agent by his one act, spreads the broad field of sentient existence with desolation, misery and woe, not where otherwise there had been nothing, but where otherwise, by his own opposite act he had diffused life, joy and perfect blessedness to all. By his one act he has both destroyed the good and produced the evil. His therefore must be the twofold misery of this twofold deed of death. And is there no additional peculiar misery in an act, which while it produces so much evil also destroys so much good, when the agent might as well have prevented the evil and produced the good? To stand at this fountain of life or of death to all, and by one act to open the stream that shall flow forth in desolation and woe unmingled, remediless, eternal, when I might instead by another act, cause the rivers of pleasure and of the fullness of joy to flow for evermore--to do that which is thus fitted to curse, instead of that which is thus fitted to bless all sentient being--it is this, which gives to remorse one of its peculiar elements of unequaled agony. What a fearful power is free-will, acting morally wrong! Who shall measure the conscious agony of acting morally wrong enhanced by the equal agony of not acting morally right in its place! Here is no necessity to alleviate what could not be avoided but conscious freedom--conscious moral liberty, with the twofold agony of the twofold work of destroying the highest happiness, and of producing the highest misery of all other beings the twofold agony within, of preventing a heaven and of producing a hell without! What other action can give such misery to a moral being?

I remark --

In the fifth place; that another element in each kind of moral action, is that it is predominant action. Under this relation, it is what is commonly called the governing principle of the mind, inasmuch as in its true nature and tendency, it reigns over the whole man, controlling and directing all other action in subservience to the accomplishment of its object or end. We have already contemplated this relation of the two kinds of moral action to the happiness and misery of others than the agent. Nor is there

perhaps any other relation under which the one more impressively reveals itself as the means of happiness, and the other of misery to the agent himself. As a Predominant principle, whether the morally right or the morally wrong principle, it sways and determines all, all thought, all feeling or emotion, all desires, all volitions, all subordinate and all executive action--the whole inner and outer man. It is the grand central power, which takes under its dominion the entire productive energy of a moral being. It thus employs powers the most exalted--powers, which in comparison degrade all others--powers unparalleled for good and for evil either for the best, or for the worst conceivable results of power.

Contemplate then, a moral being placing benevolence on the throne, and giving it perfect dominion over himself. You see in such a being, one made to live and to act for the prevention of the highest misery, and for the production of the highest happiness of a sentient universe. Behold these canopying heavens--each world of this vast system perhaps the residence of spiritual and immortal beings like our own! Amid what amplitude and splendors of existence a moral being is destined to live and to act forever! With this destination every thing comports. You see powers and capacities fitted to this high end. You see subordinate objects, ends, motives, the laws and modes of subordinate action, and executive doings, combined to give completeness to the system. You see all worthy of the infinite attributes of their author--all stamped with and fitted for, never-ending existence. In such a being you see benevolence the reigning principle--governing, guiding, employing these high powers for these high ends--directing and consecrating all with delightful activity to the accomplishment of these results, and with the joyous anticipation of accomplishing them forever. And now to sway such a scepter--to reign over and employ such powers for such ends thus to govern and employ intelligence, and feeling, and emotions and will, and heart--the entire productive energy of an immortal spirit, and that spirit one's self--what other dominion, what other condition of being, is worthy of a desire or a thought? What sublime dignity, what moral excellence, beauty and glory, in the reigning principle itself! What absolute perfection it imparts to the whole nature of a being the greatest of all, save Him who made him! What, compared with this, are the splendors of earthly royalty, even of the monarch of a thousand empires? Compared with him, this were the

apocalyptic angel, seen standing in the sun. Is there pleasure in the possession and use of power? What higher pleasure, what higher happiness than the possession and perfect use of the powers of a moral being, guided and controlled by perfect love to their perfect issues? Particularly, under the guidance and control of such a principle, how would the intellect awake, in all its forms of action, and in the vastness of its power! How, in the delightful activity of its unimpaired vigor, would it grapple with themes worthy of its strength! How, as destined to know and to know still more forever, would it exult in its own expansion and enlargement! How would it remove the clouds and darkness, that intercept the knowledge of all that is great, and good and fair, and devoted to reasonings and contemplations which become the minds of angels, partake of their happiness, in seeing and knowing all in the sunlight of changeless truth! How also, would the dominion of such a principle extend to all the primary active principles of our nature! No dull inactivity would oppress the mind; no reluctant sloth more wearisome than the effort it dreads, would stupefy the powers. Its self-active nature would be ever awake in all its susceptibilities to objects without and objects within--to the happiness of others and its own in their beautiful coincidence--to moral rectitude in its loveliness, and to moral pravity in its turpitude--to the attractive fitness of all means to ends which are good, and to the revolting fitness of all means to ends which are evil. The desire of knowledge, the desire of excellence, the desire of power, the desire of the esteem and love of others, the desire of society--every desire, tendency and appetency of our nature of the class which seem least capable of perversion, would be in place, and active to fulfill its function and to find its own gratification. Under the reign of this principle, there would be emulation without ambition, exaltation without pride, self-approbation without vanity, distinction without envy, acquisition without avarice, temperance without austerity, economy without meanness, liberality without prodigality, and excitement without agitation. There would be no extremes either in deficiency or excess, and no violence by conflicts. How too it would subdue, regulate, and direct all those propensities, lusts, and passions which annoy, molest and make wretched; preventing internal anarchy, bringing all into peaceful subjection, imparting order and harmony in their attractive beauty, and employing all these essential elements of our nature, even those which have been counted its grand defects and blemishes, only as the instruments of our highest well-being. Instead of the storms and tempests

of ungoverned appetite and passion, to darken and disturb the serenity within, the ever-present shekinah would diffuse its perpetual luster and influence.

Consider too, its achievements in difficulties overcome and deeds performed. Its work is to resist, to overcome, to control all obstacles and all enemies to truth, to virtue and happiness. How it corrects prejudice and willful pertinacity of opinion. with their false judgments and errors! How it welcomes truth not only in its light, but in its practical power! If error is death, what victories are these? How it overcomes the world, vanquishing every form of temptation, resisting corrupt example, repelling the seductive attractions of wealth, honor and pleasure, using the world as not abusing it, and rendering all its gifts tributary to a pilgrimage hastening to a better country. In its onward way, it is discouraged by no obstacles, stopped by no fatigue, put to flight by no terrors; but perpetuating its own strength for higher achievements by its use, it becomes stronger and stronger for its everlasting triumphs. What deeds of magnanimity it has performed, in dungeons, on scaffolds, on the rack, in the fire, to which worldly heroism furnishes no parallel--deeds that need not the acclamations of admiring men, for they are crowned with God's approbation. How too, in all the varied forms of beneficence, it sends forth the almoners of its bounty--the ministering spirits of its love! By its practical sympathies, by its supplies of want, by the prevention of evil, by the removal of suffering and the relief of sorrow, by the instruction of ignorance, the reformation of vice and the restoration to virtue, how, like our great Exemplar, it feeds the hungry, heals the sick, gives sight to the blind, binds up the brokenhearted, and raises the dead to life. It is the spirit of well-doing on angel-wings, waiting the orders of the throne, or flying on errands of mercy in their execution. How it adorns the mind with all the minor virtues of the inner man! How it meets crosses with cheerfulness, suffering with patience, trials with submission, injuries with forgiveness, wrath with meekness, persecution with prayer, rendering good for evil, and blessing for cursing, and bringing all, by these conquests, into sweet and peaceful subjection, how gracefully it sways the scepter! No jarring elements or violent changer, without interrupt "the soul's calm sunshine and heartfelt joy." In this sanctuary dwell truth and uprightness, integrity and justice, love and gratitude, kindness, good-will

and mercy. Piety also is here, with its adoring reverence, and love and gratitude, with its steadfast hope in immutable goodness, its confidence reposing in everlasting strength, and its fullness of joy flowing from the fountains of eternity. This is benevolence reigning in the heart. How, under its perfect dominion, would the soul be blessed! On earth, would those sister seraphs, holiness and happiness, again dwell in every heart, and paradise be regained. Like the Supreme on the throne above, summoning the angel hosts to His service, it calls forth the full and bright assemblage of all the minor virtues and graces to do its will, in blessing and in being blessed. This is the moral excellence of a moral being with its happiness--that moral excellence, whose worth, beauty, loveliness can be seen only in heaven's light, whose raptures can be expressed only in heaven's song. It is heaven itself.

Let us now contemplate the selfish principle enthroned in the heart of a moral being. We see every thing reversed. Under this dominion, we see the same exalted powers--powers unparalleled for good and for evil, employed for the worst conceivable results of power. The high powers of intellect, of emotions of will and heart, which qualify for action amid the scenes and grandeurs of eternity, powers and capacities which reveal the image, are stamped with the immortality, and bespeak the highest design of a creating Deity; these powers, with the productive energies and unchanging laws of executive action, are devoted to the destruction of the highest happiness, and to the production of the highest misery of a sentient universe; these powers in their uncounteracted nature and tendency--for so truth contemplates them--make sure their results. And now, what is it to the agent himself, thus to employ such powers for such ends? What is it, to establish such a dominion over himself? What a perversion of faculties, what a defeat of high destiny, what low and still lower depths of degradation, what an outrage on nature, what utter self-destruction! More particularly, how under the influence of the selfish principle the exalted power of intellect is employed! This faculty of a moral being is made to preside over and direct all his other powers. It gives to such a being the knowledge of the greatest of all truths--that to be happy, he must be good; and yet in forming and acting under the selfish principle, it governs him by the greatest of all lies--that to be happy, he must be selfish. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." He

who thinks right, will feel and act right; he who thinks wrong, will feel wrong and act wrong. Every impure affection, every corrupt principle, every criminal design, every wrong and vicious action, has its antecedent in thought. Thoughts grow into desires, desires ripen into resolves, and resolves terminate in execution. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts." What next? "Murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." All begins in thought. Thoughts are the precursors of all the storms and tempests of the soul--the floodgates of all which desolates, afflicts, corrupts and ruins the immortal mind. Thus intellect, that high faculty, which so exalts a moral being above every other, by giving him all truth necessary to the highest perfection of being, gives him for his practical guidance and control only falsehood and lies. With such things to be known, and with such intelligence to know them--such treasures of wisdom and of knowledge, with such power to know them by intuition, by consciousness, by reflection, by memory, by reason and judgment, with such intelligence dwelling amid the light of truth, of life, of blessedness, and yet every right and true conviction is held in abeyance, and every practical operation of thought, of contemplation, of reasoning, gives error, falsehood and death! At the same time, this intelligence by a necessity of its own nature, must see and know its own fearful perversions and the fearful issues! Who shall measure the unhappiness, the miseries of such perversions of such a power--of the violence and outrage done to this godlike faculty? Consider now the influence of the selfish over all those primary principles of the soul, which directly lead to all subordinate emotions, desires and affections. And here its first effect is to resist, counteract, and paralyze that highest susceptibility of the mind--susceptibility to happiness from the well-being of others. This part of our nature, which is the basis of all feeling in respect to right and wrong doing, of all the affections, desires, and emotions that respect the true well-being of others and our own, is held in abeyance, or rather be numbed into inaction and torpidity.

LECTURE III: The law of a perfect moral government requires benevolence as the sum of obedience, and forbids selfishness as the sum of disobedience on the part of its subjects.

V. A perfect Moral Government involves the exercise of authority through the medium of law--The nature of such a law further unfolded. -- Third characteristic of the law so demanded in a perfect Moral Government, viz.: it requires benevolence and forbids selfishness. -- Relation of predominant to subordinate action. -- Benevolence and selfishness defined. -- These constitute the only kind of action possible to a moral being. -- Manner in which the law requires and forbids subordinate action. -- Benevolence and selfishness the only morally right and wrong actions.

THIRDLY. The law of a perfect moral government requires benevolence as the sum of obedience, and forbids selfishness as the sum of disobedience on the part of its subjects.

By this I mean that the law of a perfect moral government absolutely and universally requires benevolence and benevolence only, and that it absolutely and universally forbids selfishness and selfishness only, while by this universal requirement, it virtually or in effect requires subordinate action only as such action becomes in the variable circumstances of its subjects, the appropriate expression of benevolence; and by this universal prohibition, it virtually or in effect forbids subordinate action only as it becomes in the variable circumstances of its subjects, the appropriate expression of selfishness.

Before I proceed to offer the proof of this proposition, I deem it important to distinguish the different kinds of action on the part of moral beings, which the law of a perfect moral government may be supposed to respect.

Premising that by a moral being I mean not one who acts or has acted morally, but one who, from his nature and condition, is qualified to act morally, and is under a necessity of so acting, I proceed to say, that --

All the action which is predicable of such a being when he acts, and which now demands consideration, may be included in two kinds, viz., that in which he electively prefers some object or end as his supreme or chief object, and that action which is dictated or prompted by this preference. Every moral being as such comes under the necessity, from his nature and condition, of acting with his will and heart in respect to some object or end, as his supreme or chief object or end; that is, of electively preferring some object or end to every other in competition with it, as an object of preference; or of supremely loving some such object or end. This act or state of the mind, as contemplated under somewhat different aspects and relations, we commonly call the supreme affection, the prevailing disposition, the governing principle, the controlling purpose of the mind. The true nature and tendency of this state or act of the mind is to dictate or prompt, to control or govern all other action of the being. This state of mind, considered as action cognizable by law, is too often lost sight of by moralists, as if moral obligation had no respect to the acts of the will and heart--the most important of all action, because the word action is most frequently applied to executive doings. To avoid this error, I propose to distinguish the two kinds of action by one peculiar and prominent characteristic, and shall call the one predominant action, and the other subordinate action.

Each of these kinds of action may be subdivided into two other kinds.

Predominant action consists either in benevolence or in selfishness. These are the only predominant acts of which a moral being is capable, and one or the other is predicable of every being of whom moral character, viz., morally right or morally wrong action, is predicable. Benevolence consists in the elective preference of, or in electively preferring, the highest well-being of all sentient beings, for its own sake, to every object in competition with it, as an object of choice or preference. Selfishness consists in the elective preference of, or in electively preferring, some inferior good to the highest well-being of all sentient

beings, and is, of course, a preference of this inferior good to the prevention of the highest misery of all; that is, a preference of the highest misery of all to the absence of the inferior good, as these objects come into competition as objects of choice or preference.

It is important to our purpose to specify some of the characteristics which are common to the two kinds of predominant action, and those wherein they differ.

Each then, is an act of the will and heart, or an elective preference, by which I mean that it includes two elements, viz., choice and affection. Each is an intelligent act, or an act done with the present knowledge or intellectual apprehension of the nature of action, as related to the great and true end of action on the part of a moral being. Each is a free act, or an act done with entire exemption from the influence of every cause of the act, which, in the circumstances in which it takes place, renders the act necessary. Each is a permanent act, or an act which tends to its own perpetuity, and is for the most part perpetual. Each is predominant action, or action which tends to secure all other action, as it becomes the necessary means of accomplishing the end of the predominant action. Such are the elements in which the two elective preferences called benevolence and selfishness agree.

Wherein do these kinds of action differ? Thus. Benevolence is action whose direct end is the great end of all action on the part of a moral being, and which is perfectly fitted, in all the circumstances of such a being, to produce this end, viz., the highest well-being of all other sentient beings and of the agent himself. Selfishness is action, whose direct end is some end inferior to the great end of action on the part of a moral being, and which, is perfectly fitted, in all the circumstances of such a being, to defeat this end, and to produce the opposite end, the highest misery of all other sentient beings and of the agent himself.

There is one end of action on the part of moral beings which, as

determined by their nature and their relations, may be said to be the great end of all action on their part, or, as it is sometimes called, "the chief end" of such beings, viz., the highest possible well-being of each and of all. This is an end, to the promotion of which, or to the prevention of which in the promotion of the opposite end, the highest misery of all, all action on the part of moral beings has, in a greater or less degree, a relation of tendency or fitness. It is, therefore, emphatically the great end or the chief end of all action on their part--not, indeed, as the end at which they actually aim, but as that end at which they are qualified to aim and to promote, and at which they must supremely aim if they would promote or secure the great end of their being. There is one, and only one kind of action on the part of a moral being, whose direct end is the great end of all action on his part, viz., benevolence, or the elective preference of this end to every other in competition with it, as an object of election or choice. In this sense benevolence, as action whose direct object or end is the great end of all action on the part of a moral being, may be said to be the action, and the only action, which is perfectly fitted to promote or accomplish this end. There is one, and only one kind of action on the part of a moral being, whose direct end is some end inferior to this great end, instead of this great end, viz., selfishness, or an elective preference of the inferior end to this great end, in which the agent virtually and actually proposes to destroy all other good, and to produce the highest misery of all for the sake of this direct and inferior end. In this sense selfishness may be said to be perfectly fitted, and to be the only action which is perfectly fitted to prevent the highest well-being of all and to produce the highest misery of all.

Thus every moral being who possesses a moral character, or who acts morally right or morally wrong, electively prefers some object or end as his supreme object or end. In this state of his will and affections, and when under its controlling influence, he ever aims to promote or accomplish that object or end. It maintains an habitual ascendancy in the mind, dictating and controlling his particular acts, as these include particular thoughts, affections, desires, dispositions, volitions, and overt doings, in subservience to the accomplishment of that object or end. Without this predominant act or state of the mind there could be no consistency in his conduct as a moral being, and no uniformity of

character--nothing which can be called moral character.

Again, there is, as I have said, another kind of action, viz., subordinate action. By subordinate action is meant all that kind of action which is dictated and controlled by predominant action, by the supreme affection, governing principle or purpose of the mind, and which is done in subservience to, or to promote the end of the governing principle or purpose. This kind of action may be divided into two particular kinds of subordinate action. The one consists in particular elective preferences, voluntary affections, dispositions or purposes, in which no present or immediate action of either mind or body is directly willed. This may be called immanent subordinate action. The other consists in willing directly some present mental or bodily action, and in the action willed. This may be called executive subordinate action. Examples of the former--justice, honesty, veracity, gratitude, humanity or kindness to fellow-beings, patriotism, natural affection or love of kindred, friendship, honor, etc.; and their opposites--all these, considered as habitual dispositions, affections, Purposes, principles--as mental acts or states, which involve acts of Will or are elective preferences of their particular objects in which no present acts are directly willed, are examples of immanent subordinate action. Examples of the latter are the act of rendering to another his due, the act of speaking truth, the act of giving alms, etc., etc., and their opposites. These, considered as including in each instance the act willed and the act of willing it, are examples of executive subordinate action. For the purpose of distinguishing the elements of any action of the latter class, We may call one element the imperative volition, and the other the overt action.

In this view of subordinate action, it is obvious that the direct end of such action, that is, the end directly aimed at by the mind in such action, is not the great end of all action on the part of a moral being, nor the opposite end, and that, in this sense, subordinate action is not fitted to promote this end nor to defeat it. On the contrary, the mind, the agent in all subordinate action, directly aims only at some limited degree of happiness or misery. In so acting, he can aim at the great end of action only indirectly--that is, through the predominant action. When such action

is directly fitted to produce some limited degree of happiness, which is necessary to the highest well-being of all, then it is indirectly fitted to promote this great end; and when it is directly fitted to produce some limited degree of happiness which is inconsistent with this great end, or some limited degree of misery which is inconsistent with it, then it is indirectly fitted to defeat this great end, and to promote its opposite.

Having thus distinguished the different kinds of action on the part of moral beings, I now proceed to show that the law of a perfect moral government requires benevolence as the sum of obedience, and forbids selfishness as the sum of disobedience; in other words, that it absolutely requires benevolence and benevolence only, and forbids selfishness and selfishness only, in all circumstances; while by this requirement and prohibition it virtually or in effect requires and forbids other action, only as such action becomes in the variable circumstances of its subjects, the appropriate expression of benevolence and selfishness. This will appear from the following considerations:

First. Predominant action, either in the form of benevolence or selfishness is not only unavoidable, but it is the only action on the part of moral beings which, in all the circumstances essential to their condition, is possible. The circumstances of moral beings are of two kinds; those which are essential to their condition as moral beings, which are invariable, and which are common to all their actual circumstances; and those which are not essential to their condition as moral beings, which are variable, and therefore not common to all their actual circumstances. Now every moral being as such exists in such circumstances and sustains such relations, that he is under an absolute necessity from his nature and his circumstances to perform predominant action, either in the form of benevolence or of selfishness. He must choose either the highest well-being of the sentient universe, or some inferior object as his supreme object. The former is to him an object of possible choice. On the choice of it depends his highest well-being. He is therefore under the necessity either of choosing it, or not choosing it as his supreme good. If he chooses this object as his supreme object, he is a benevolent being. If he does not, then he chooses some interior object, rather than this; and

is a selfish being. He is therefore under an absolute necessity of performing predominant action, of becoming in heart--in principle--in the governing purpose of the mind, either a benevolent or a selfish being, which necessity is as fixed and unavoidable as are his nature and his circumstances. Nor in those circumstances which are essential to his condition as a moral being, is any other action possible than predominant action, either in the form of benevolence or of selfishness. All other action is in the nature of things, dictated or prompted by predominant action--is the consequent and effect of predominant action--and therefore utterly impossible without prior predominant action. All other action is subordinate action; and all subordinate action is, in different respects circumstantial or conditional action. The possibility of such action depends on variable circumstances, which are not essential to the condition of a moral being, nor common to all his actual circumstances. No moral being can in disposition, principle, affection, volition, purpose, become either just or unjust, true or false, honest or dishonest, or perform any other immanent, subordinate act or action, until he has become either benevolent or selfish; and therefore not until predominant action in the form of benevolence or selfishness has taken place. The same thing is true in respect to all executive subordinate action; for this also depends on prior predominant action. All subordinate action therefore, since it depends on prior predominant action, is in this respect circumstantial, as it depends on variable circumstances, which are not essential to the condition of a moral being. Nor is this all. A moral being, in one set of variable circumstances, may be under the necessity of performing either one kind of subordinate action or its opposite; for example, of being either just or unjust in disposition or purpose, or in another case, of acting executively either justly or unjustly. In another set of variable circumstances, he may be under the necessity of performing either another kind of subordinate action or its opposite; for example, of being in purpose or will either true or false; or in another case, of speaking truth or falsehood. Thus, when subordinate action becomes possible by the existence of prior predominant action, whether such possible subordinate action be of one kind or of another kind, depends on those variable circumstances which are not essential to the condition of a moral being. And further, there is no kind of subordinate action, which in any circumstances is fitted to subserve the end of benevolence, which in some other circumstances may not be fitted to subserve the end of selfishness, and be prompted by this principle. Thus a man may love his

kindred, or his country, he may purpose to be just, honest, faithful and true; to give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned, either from the benevolent or the selfish principle. At the same time there are few if any kinds of subordinate action, which in all circumstances are fitted only to promote the end of selfishness, or which in some possible circumstances may not be fitted to subserve the end of benevolence, and be performed from this principle. Thus the general purpose to destroy, or this purpose in connection with the act of destroying the dwellings of others, in ordinary circumstances would be ascribed to the selfish principle and pronounced under this complex conception injustice; and yet the same act as immanent subordinate action, in the form of a purpose or as including the executive act, when contemplated as necessary on the part of firemen to prevent the burning of a city, would be demanded by benevolence, and may be prompted by this principle. So the immanent act including the executive subordinate act which respects taking the life of our fellow-beings, in one case is justly esteemed an act of selfishness, and in another case an act demanded by benevolence; and may be prompted by benevolence. It may be a question with some, in view of the example of the Saviour in LUKE xxiv. 19-28--to say nothing of defeating the design of an assassin by stratagem or of attacking an invading army by ambuscade, whether the act of deceiving so commonly considered as in all cases resulting from the selfish principle, and equivalent to lying, may not in some cases be dictated by the benevolent principle. Without deciding however, whether there be any kind of subordinate action, which in all the variable circumstances of moral beings, can be dictated only by the selfish principle, it is evident that all that action which I have called subordinate action, is prompted by predominant action; and that such action is absolutely impossible on the part of moral beings, without prior predominant action.

Now that the law of a perfect moral government should require and forbid action, which in the circumstances of the beings to whom it is given, is utterly impossible on their part, is preposterous and incredible. It is equally preposterous and incredible, that the law of such a government should not require benevolence and forbid selfishness in all circumstances in which they are possible on the part of subjects. Since

then the law of such a government, absolutely requires and forbids predominant action, and predominant action only in all the circumstances of its subjects which are essential to their moral condition, and therefore in all their circumstances, and since benevolence and selfishness are the only kinds of predominant action, it follows, that the law of a perfect moral government absolutely and universally requires benevolence, and benevolence only, and forbids selfishness and selfishness only, on the part of its subjects.

This view of the subject will be further confirmed, by considering the manner in which the law of a perfect moral government requires and forbids subordinate, action. This law, as we have said, by its requirement and its prohibition of predominant action, virtually or in effect requires and forbids subordinate action only as such action becomes in the variable circumstances of its subjects, the appropriate expression of benevolence and of selfishness.

As we have seen, predominant action on the part of the subjects of law, is possible in all their circumstances as moral beings, while in some of their circumstances subordinate action is impossible. Now it is the nature and tendency of predominant action to go forth into the appropriate expressions of itself in subordinate action, according to the variable circumstances of the subject, in which the possibility and necessity of such action arise. Hence, to require predominant action in the form of benevolence absolutely and universally, is virtually and in effect, to require all its appropriate expressions in subordinate action, as the possibility and necessity of such action arise in all the variable circumstances of the subject; and to forbid predominant action in the form of selfishness absolutely and universally, is virtually and in effect, to forbid all its appropriate expressions in subordinate action, as the possibility and necessity of such action arise, in all the variable circumstances of the subject. Nor is there any other mode in which the law of a perfect moral government can require and forbid subordinate action. To suppose that it should, is to suppose that it should go beyond the obligation of the subject in its requirement and prohibition; subordinate action being utterly impossible in some circumstances of the

subject. The law therefore, does all it can do by absolute and universal requirement, to secure all the subordinate action, which in all the variable and all the possible circumstances of the subject, can become the appropriate expression of benevolence; and all it can do by absolute and universal prohibition, to prevent all the subordinate action which in all the variable and possible circumstances of the subject, can become the appropriate expression of selfishness. In its absolute and universal requirement of benevolence, it requires a permanent predominant principle of action in all the circumstances of the subject, which gives the best security which the nature of things admits of, that all subordinate action which is the appropriate expression of this principle in all the variable circumstances of the subject, will be performed; and in its absolute and universal prohibition of selfishness, it forbids a principle of action in all the circumstances of the subject, which gives the best security which the nature of things admits of, that all subordinate action which is the appropriate expression of this principle in all the variable circumstances of the subject, will be prevented.

Should it here be said that, according to this view of the law under consideration, it cannot absolutely and universally require and forbid any subordinate action whatever--not even thus require justice or veracity, nor thus forbid injustice or falsehood--I answer, that the law cannot require and forbid action which, in the circumstances of the subject, is, from the nature of the case, utterly impossible. It cannot require justice and forbid injustice, when it is thus impossible that the subject should be either just or unjust; and the subject can be neither just nor unjust, in any import of the language, until he has become either benevolent or selfish. He must act in one or in the other of these forms of predominant action before he can perform any subordinate act whatever. When therefore, we speak without qualification, as we often do, and yet with sufficient precision for all ordinary purposes of the law, as requiring and forbidding certain kinds of subordinate action, all that can be meant is, that by requiring and forbidding it in its principle, it requires and forbids it virtually or in effect in all the variable circumstances of the subject in which such action becomes possible. In this mode the law requires and forbids subordinate action, in the only conceivable mode of requiring and forbidding it, by a perfect and universal law. Indeed, were this mode of requiring and

forbidding subordinate action not adopted, subordinate action must be left, to an interminable extent, wholly without requirement and prohibition in any respect whatever; the supposition of particular precepts to regulate all subordinate action being preposterous in the extreme.

It is readily admitted, that the law of a perfect moral government, like the decalogue, may, for good reasons and to a limited extent, specify in the form of particular requirements and prohibitions, subordinate action to be done and not done. But it is maintained that all such precepts, so far as they respect merely subordinate action, are only formal specifications or statements of such action, which as the appropriate expression of benevolence and selfishness in the variable circumstances in which it becomes possible, becomes in some sense binding on the subject; and not moral precepts or laws which imply the moral quality of such action; that all such precepts, though useful and important in many respects, especially as they relate to--action which is possible in nearly all the variable circumstances of the subject, are yet to be interpreted in regard to the universality of their application, as all such language is, by the known limits of possibility and impossibility, and by the known object and design of the precepts themselves. The universal form of the language of particular precepts is one thing; the universal application of such precepts, even in all the variable circumstances of the subject, is another. This distinction is recognized in respect to every particular precept, so far as such relate to merely subordinate action, in both parental and civil governments. This shows that such precepts are not of the nature of absolute and universal law, but are rather highly useful directions, which, however extensive their application within the variable circumstances of the subject, and however unqualified the language in which they are expressed, depend on the variable circumstances of the subject for their binding force, and which, therefore, admit of possible, though rare exceptions, so far as changes in these circumstances may require exceptions, in view of the great end of all action on the part of moral beings. Vide PALEY, MOR. AND POL. PHIL., P. VI., c. 4.

It is evident then, that the law of a perfect moral government absolutely and universally requires and forbids predominant action, and only

requires and forbids other action virtually or in effect, as it becomes in the variable circumstances of the subject, the appropriate expression of predominant action. It is equally evident, that benevolence and selfishness are the only kinds of predominant action on the part of moral beings. It follows therefore, that the law of a perfect moral government requires benevolence as the sum of all obedience, and forbids selfishness as the sum of all disobedience on the part of its subjects.

It seems greatly to perplex some moralists to distinguish the mode in which, or the ground on which, the law of a perfect moral government requires and forbids predominant action as the principle of subordinate action, from the mode in which, or the ground on which, it requires and forbids subordinate action itself. It seems to them that a law which, in the manner explained, requires and forbids subordinate action in the variable circumstances of the subject, only virtually or in effect, by the absolute and universal requirement and prohibition of predominant action, furnishes as a rule of action no adequate security for the existence of one kind, and for the prevention of another kind of subordinate action, and so jeopardizes the interests of practical morality. To show how entirely groundless such views are, it is sufficient to say that it is impossible, in the nature of things, that the law in its absolute and universal requirement and prohibition, should extend beyond the two, kinds of predominant action, since in such a case, it would extend beyond the limits of obligation on the part of the subject. Besides, if the requirement of the one and the prohibition of the other of the two great predominant principles of action, will not secure the sufficiently known and obvious expressions of the one, and prevent the sufficiently known and obvious expressions of the other of these principles in appropriate subordination, how would such subordinate action be secured in one case and prevented in the other, by formally expressed particular precepts? The subject who should obey the essential requirement and prohibition of the law, would also, while the principle remains active and controlling in the mind, obey all its sufficiently known and obvious virtual requirements and prohibitions in subordinate action, as they become applicable in all his variable circumstances; while if he should not obey the former, there would not only be no security that he would obey the latter, but an absolute certainty that he would disobey them in every instance in which

such disobedience should be necessary to accomplish the end of his governing principle, though they were formally expressed in particular enactments. Such enactments could be only formal expressions of the virtual requirements and prohibitions of the fundamental law, and could be of no advantage to the cause of practical morality in those cases, in which these virtual requirements and prohibitions were sufficiently known without them.

If these things are so in the cases supposed, i.e., in all cases in which the virtual requirements and prohibitions of the fundamental law are sufficiently known or sufficiently obvious for all practical purposes, it may be naturally asked, why are particular precepts in the form of requirement and prohibition confessedly necessary in all forms of moral government, even in that which is undeniably perfect? I answer, that these precepts are necessary in all cases in which they are so, for certain purposes peculiar to subordinate action in the variable circumstances in which such action becomes possible. In some cases they are necessary to remove unavoidable ignorance in respect to the subordinate action, which were it not for such ignorance, would be virtually required or forbidden by the fundamental law. In some cases they are necessary to render more manifest the fitness of the subordinate action thus virtually required and forbidden, and thus to remove doubt and uncertainty, and to prevent perverted and false judgments in respect to it, and so to give greater security to the performance of one kind of such action, and to abstinence from the other, than would otherwise exist. In some cases, if not in all, they give definiteness to the kind of subordinate action which they respect, as such action is the proof of obedience and disobedience to the fundamental law. But, more than all, such precepts are binding to an extent so nearly universal in all the variable circumstances of men, and with exceptions so rare, that exceptions need not be made, or if made, prove the rule, and therefore can never be violated without great caution, and in cases of obvious and undeniable utility. But the necessity of these particular precepts for these or other similar purposes shows that they respect only that kind of action which is virtually required or forbidden in the variable circumstances of the subjects of law, and not the action which constitutes the sum of obedience and the sum of disobedience to the law of a perfect moral government.

It may be further said that particular precepts are often, not to say commonly, promulgated in that absolute and universal form of language which imply their strictly universal application and obligation. In reply to this, it were sufficient to allege the utter and obvious impossibility of such an application of this class of precepts, since all action to which they can be applied is impossible, until the subject of law has become either benevolent or selfish. If, by the universal application of these precepts, be meant an application as extensive as the possibility of subordinate action, this may be admitted in respect to some kinds of such action, particularly some immanent subordinate action; for example, justice and injustice as mere dispositions of the mind. Still, it must be remembered, that such subordinate action may be prompted either by benevolence or selfishness; and that, therefore, considered in itself as merely subordinate action, it can be no part of that which essentially constitutes obedience or disobedience to the law of a perfect moral government. Thus considered, such action can be required and forbidden by the law, only virtually or in effect, as circumstantial action--action which becomes the appropriate expression of benevolence and of selfishness in the variable circumstances of the subject. As such action and such action only, can particular precepts be applicable to it in any case whatever. As to those particular precepts which are designed to regulate much other subordinate action, they are still more remote from having a universal application; particularly those which respect executive subordinate action. The principle on which universal forms of language are used in common life is not that of the most strictly universal application, but that of an application so nearly universal, that the exceptions are so rare and so obvious that they require no specification, while the object of such precepts will be better answered by an unqualified use of language than by the useless attempt to specify exceptions. This principle, which might be illustrated and confirmed to any extent, is peculiarly applicable to particular legal enactments, which respect executive subordinate action. The common-sense application of it to the interpretation of such absolute precepts by the Saviour, and the same familiar application of it by Christians generally to justify works of necessity and mercy on the Sabbath, are decisive on this point. A parent forbids a son, in the form of absolute prohibition, who is but partially recovered from recent illness, to go into the water; but unexpected circumstances occur, and the action

thus absolutely forbidden becomes necessary to save a brother from drowning. Who, in such a case, would interpret the precept to the letter? None would deny the propriety and truth of saying that the fundamental requirement of the divine law is binding on all men; and yet the proposition is not true to the letter, since the obligation implies not merely the existence, but the moral relations of its subjects. None would deny the propriety of the absolute form in which the penalty of law is denounced against the transgressor, and yet, if the language be pressed to the utmost, the penalty can never be remitted consistently with truth.

In the use of all language, and especially in the use of the language of law, there is an object to be attained. Such language is therefore to be interpreted in reference to that object. The object of language in the form of particular precepts is to secure and to prevent subordinate action, as in the variable circumstances of the subjects of law it will in one case promote, and in the other hinder in some limited degree, the general good. The subordinate action may be supposed to be that which, in all the variable circumstances of the subject in which it becomes possible, will promote the general good. The subordinate opposite action may be supposed to be that which, in all the variable circumstances of the subject in which it becomes possible, will hinder the general good. At the same time, the subordinate action which in some cases is fitted to promote the general good, will in other cases be fitted to defeat this end, or the subordinate action which in some cases is fitted to defeat, may be fitted in others to promote this end. Be these things however as they may, the application of particular precepts is in all cases to be determined in view of the nature and tendency of the executive subordinate action required and forbidden in such precepts, in the variable circumstances of the subject of law.

These things are deemed sufficient to show the truth of the unqualified proposition, that he who is perfectly benevolent, perfectly obeys the law of a perfect moral government. Nor can this be denied on the ground that one who is thus perfectly benevolent, may not fulfill all the precepts which respect subordinate action; for it is undeniable, that he will obey every such precept.

Once more. It is conceded, at least by all Christian moralists, that the sum of all duty on the part of moral beings is comprised in the great law of love or benevolence. But how this can be true, except according to the views and principles now presented, it would be impossible to show.

The same thing will appear, if we consider--secondly, That predominant action in the form of benevolence, is the only morally right action, and in the form of selfishness, is the only morally wrong action on the part of moral beings.

It will be admitted, that the law of a perfect moral government requires morally right: action as the sum of obedience, and forbids morally wrong action as the sum of disobedience. If then it can be shown, that benevolence is the only morally right action, and that selfishness is the only morally wrong action, it will follow, that the law of a perfect moral government must require benevolence as the sum of obedience, and forbid benevolence as the sum of disobedience.

That benevolence then is the only morally right action, and that selfishness is the only morally wrong action, I argue--

1st. From the established meaning of the words right and wrong in common life, and from the meaning of the word moral as applied to action.

The errors and incongruities of moral philosophers, which so notoriously mar their discussions, and which occasion so much apparently hopeless controversy, seem to result chiefly from overlooking the true nature of the moral quality of action and the kind of action to which moral quality exclusively pertains. This oversight may be traced to several causes, primarily it is believed, to the entire want of scientific precision in the use

of the words right and wrong, and other kindred terms. Without however, attempting to unfold these causes, or to show the magnitude of this error in scientific speculation, I propose to distinguish right action which is moral, from right action which is not moral; and wrong action which is moral, from wrong action which is not moral.

For this purpose I remark, that among the most common and important conceptions of the human mind, are those of the different and opposite relations of different things to some given end, either as fitted. to accomplish or to prevent that end. To express these conceptions, the words right and wrong are of the most common and familiar use; and when thus used in their general import, may be thus defined: the word right denotes the fitness of that to which it is applied, to produce or accomplish some given end; and the word wrong denotes the fitness of that to which it is applied, to prevent the same given end. In the use of these words, some given end is always assumed, in respect to the accomplishment or prevention of which they are always applied. Thus assuming the familiar end to be accomplished by a pen, a clock or a watch, we apply the word right to its structure, to denote its fitness to accomplish that end; and the word wrong to denote its fitness to defeat or prevent that end. In this manner, one or the other of these words may be properly applied to any and to every thing of which either of the two specified relations of fitness to some given end, can be predicated. Even the stroke of the assassin, as by its direction it is fitted to accomplish or to defeat its end, may be properly said to be right or to be wrong. Nor can either of these words, when used antithetically or in opposition to the other, be properly used except to denote the specified relation to some assumed end. We can no more predicate right or wrong, the one as opposed to the other of any conceivable thing, except to the specified relation to some given end, than we can predicate red or blue of ideas or other mental states. When a thing is said to be right as opposed to wrong, it is said to be so as fitted to produce some given end, and when it is said to be wrong as opposed to right, it is said to be so as fitted to prevent that end. Thus in the use of these words as opposed in import, an end is always assumed, in relation to which a thing is said to be right or wrong. In this antithetic use of the words, they can have no conceivable meaning, unless they are used to denote some relation to an end. The end assumed in respect to a particular thing, as a pen, a clock or a watch, in respect to which it is said to be right or wrong, is the end,

the great or chief end, for which the class of things and of course each particular thing of the class is made.

Now, according to the universal principle of giving the same general names to things of the same general nature, the same general relations of fitness to promote or hinder the end, or the great end of any thing, are denoted by the words right or wrong. Of course, the same general ideas of fitness to produce or prevent the end, or the great end of action on the part of moral beings, are denoted by the words right and wrong, when applied to such action. To deny this, is to deny a fixed and universal principle in the use of words. It is to deny, in the language of logic, that the genus is predicable of the species; or that the same word has one and the same general meaning as applied to different things to which it can be truly applied in that meaning. It is the same as to deny, that the word black or white has the same general meaning when applied to a bird and a horse of the same color, or that the word rectangular or triangular has the same meaning when applied to different figures of the same general form. It would not be less preposterous to suppose, that the words right and wrong should be properly applied to action in the general meaning now given to each, and that they should also be thus applied to action, in another and a widely different meaning. For it is undeniable, that one kind of action, as fitted to promote the great end of all action on the part of moral beings and to prevent the opposite end, is truly and properly called right action. It is equally undeniable, that another kind of action, as fitted to prevent the great end of all action on the part of moral beings, and to promote the opposite end, is truly and properly called wrong action. It is therefore as utterly incredible, that the word right or wrong should be applied to action in another meaning which excludes this meaning, or in any other generic meaning, as that the word round should be universally applied to a body to denote its form, and yet be properly applied also to denote its color.

Since then all action on the part of moral beings is either fitted to promote the great end of action on their part and to prevent the opposite end, or fitted to prevent this great end of action and to promote its opposite; and as the great end of all action on the part of such beings is the highest

happiness of all, it follows, that the word right when applied in its general meaning to such action, denotes its fitness to promote the highest happiness of all, and to prevent the opposite or highest misery of all, and that the word wrong when thus applied, denotes the fitness of action to promote the highest misery of all and to prevent the opposite.

Again; right action may be subdivided into two particular kinds, viz.: right action which is moral or morally right action, and right action which is not moral, or not morally right action. Wrong action may be subdivided into two particular kinds, viz.: wrong action which is moral or morally wrong action, and wrong action which is not moral, or not morally wrong action.

The word moral as applied to action is a common predicate of two very different kinds of action. Hence, to distinguish moral action from action not moral, we have only to determine this common import of the word moral as applied to two kinds of action, or to right and wrong action.

The word moral is from the Latin *mores*, which denotes manners or character; more exactly, that permanent, predominant act of the will and heart, which constitutes character as a predicate of a moral being. For philosophic purposes however, it is necessary to contemplate this meaning of the word moral more elementarily. With the explanation already given of the terms now to be used in the definition, I proceed to say--that moral action is the intelligent, free, permanent, predominant action of the heart, in which the agent elects some given object or end as his supreme end, and which is thus directly fitted to promote this end, and to prevent its opposite.

That all action of which the several characteristics now specified can be truly predicated, is moral action, I have attempted to show in a previous lecture. I shall, therefore, only remark at present, that the feelings of self-complacency and remorse are the distinctive effects of moral acts experienced by the agent in view of the nature of such action, and that it is impossible to conceive that any being should experience either of

these feelings in view of any other action than that now specified, and that he should avoid one or the other in view of such action. The being therefore, acts morally who acts in the manner now specified, whether he acts or can act in any other manner, or not; while if we suppose him to act in any other manner without acting in this manner, we cannot conceive him to act morally. The action then now specified is moral action, and the only action which is moral.

From what has now been said respecting the nature of right and wrong action and of moral action, it follows, that the intelligent, free, permanent, predominant action of the will and the heart, in which the agent electively prefers the highest wellbeing of all as his supreme object or end, and which is thus fitted to promote, this end and to prevent its opposite, the highest misery of all, is morally right action, and the only morally right action, and that the intelligent, free, permanent, predominant action of the will and the heart, in which the agent electively prefers some object or end inferior to the highest wellbeing of all as his supreme object or end, and which is thus fitted to prevent this end and to promote its opposite, the highest misery of all, is morally wrong action, and the only morally wrong action.

The same thing will be still further confirmed by considering the only other kind of action on the part of a moral being; viz., that which I have called subordinate action. This kind of action is either right action, which is not morally right, or it is wrong action, which is not morally wrong.

Though a moral being in respect to predominant action, may be properly said to be always acting either morally right, or morally wrong, yet in much of what is called action on the part of a moral being, there is no moral quality. This is true of all that action, which may be distinguished from the act of the will and the heart, or predominant action, and in which the Agent aims only at some limited degree of happiness or misery, or natural good or evil compared with the highest degree, and which in this respect, is fitted directly to produce only such a limited result. There are two kinds of such action; one is right action, but not morally right--the

other is wrong action, but not morally wrong.

When such action, that is subordinate action, is directly fitted to produce some limited degree of natural good or evil, which is necessary to the highest happiness of all, and thus indirectly fitted to promote this great end of all action on the part of moral beings and to prevent the opposite, then it is right action but not morally right. It is right in the generic import of the word as already defined, when applied to action on the part of moral beings. As indirectly fitted, it is of course fitted to promote the great end of all action, and to prevent the opposite; and is therefore right action. But it is obvious at once, from what has been said, that it is not morally right action. It has no one of the essential characteristics of morally right action. It is not in the sense explained, either the intelligent, or free, or permanent, or predominant action of the will and heart. Nor is it the action in which the agent supremely and directly aims at the great end of all action, and which in this sense is perfectly fitted to promote this end, and to prevent its opposite. Beside, the same action with the same relation of fitness to the great end of all action and to prevent its opposite, would be right in the same sense, whether done from the morally right or from the morally wrong principle. To suppose the right subordinate action to be morally right, is to suppose that one may act morally right, when he acts morally wrong at the same time.

Again; when subordinate action is directly fitted to produce some limited degree of natural good or evil, which is inconsistent with the highest happiness of all, and thus indirectly fitted to prevent this great end of all action (and to promote the opposite), then it is wrong action but not morally wrong action. It is wrong in the generic import of the word; for being indirectly fitted, it is of course fitted to prevent the great end of all action, and to promote its opposite. It is therefore wrong action. But it is plainly not morally wrong, inasmuch as it is obvious that it has no one of the essential characteristics of morally wrong action.

In addition to these things, it is to be remarked that the quality of all subordinate action changes as the variable circumstances of moral

beings change; so that an action of this kind which is right in one set of circumstances is wrong in another set of circumstances; and an action of this kind, which is wrong in one set of circumstances, is right in another. But morally right action is morally right in all the circumstances of a moral being; and morally wrong action is morally wrong in all the circumstances of a moral being. But action, the quality of which as right and wrong changes as circumstances change, cannot be morally right nor morally wrong action. Subordinate action, therefore, though it may be right or wrong, cannot be either morally right or morally wrong. It thus appears that no action except predominant action, is or can be either morally right or morally wrong. But there is no predominant action, except either benevolence or selfishness. No action then is morally right except benevolence, and no action is morally wrong except selfishness; in other words, benevolence is the only morally right action, and selfishness is the only morally wrong action. Since therefore, it is admitted that the law of a perfect moral government requires morally right action as the sum of obedience, and forbids morally wrong action as the sum of disobedience, it follows, that the law of such a government must require benevolence as the sum of obedience, and forbid selfishness as the sum of disobedience.

LECTURE IV: It must express the Lawgiver's preference of the action required, to its opposite, all things considered.

V. A perfect Moral Government Involves the exercise of authority through the medium of law. The nature of law further unfolded -- 4. It must express the Lawgiver's preference of the action required, to its opposite, all things considered -- 5. It implies, that the Lawgiver can be satisfied with obedience, and with nothing but obedience, on the part of the subject -- 6. It expresses his highest approbation of obedience and his highest disapprobation of disobedience.

THESE three propositions may at first sight appear to be so nearly equivalent, as to supersede any necessity for distinct consideration. The difference between them however, and the importance of distinguishing them, for the purpose of exposing opposite errors will be obvious from

the discussion.

4. The law of a perfect moral government must express the lawgiver's preference of the action required to its opposite, all things considered.

Some have maintained it to be consistent with the nature of such a law, that it express the lawgiver's preference of obedience to disobedience in themselves considered, while at the same time he actually prefers disobedience to obedience, in many cases at least, all things considered. In opposition to this view, it is now maintained, that the law of a perfect moral government, expresses the lawgiver's preference of obedience to disobedience all things considered, that is; when all things which depend on the former are compared with all things which depend or can be made to depend on the latter, either as its own proper results, or by the infliction of punishment, or in any other way.

This view of the import of the word law, or this nature of a law may be tested by an appeal to common sense. Suppose a father to enact a law, that his children shall not lie, cheat, nor drink to excess. This being the unqualified form of the law, suppose him to add by way of explanation: "On the whole, or all things considered, I prefer, that you should transgress rather than obey the law--that you should lie, and cheat and drink, rather than tell the truth, and be honest and sober" would not common sense pronounce the so-called law a contemptible burlesque and a mockery? And yet such, without, a shade of caricature, is the law of God in the view of infidels, universalists, and all who maintain that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good. If men will thus go against common sense, they must expect common sense to go against them.

But this topic demands and will receive a more thorough consideration hereafter. Some further remarks will, however, not be out of place in this connection. A law then, which is not an unqualified expression of the lawgiver's preference of the action required to its opposite, all things considered, is not a law. It expresses no will, no choice, no preference,

and therefore can in no respect be a command, either as a requirement or a prohibition. The will cannot prefer one thing to another in themselves considered, and at the same time prefer the latter to the former, all things considered. The mind may involuntarily desire one thing more than another in themselves considered. But an involuntary desire is not an act of will; it is not an act of choice, or an elective preference. The will or mind can choose between two objects, and so prefer one to the other only in view of them all things considered. To suppose it to do both at the same time, is to suppose that it can choose opposites at the same time, which is as absurd as to suppose that a body should move in opposite directions at the same time. Or, view this topic in another aspect. If the two choices or preferences supposed may coexist in the same mind and should so exist--which would show itself in executive action, or which of the two wills would a benevolent being express in the form of law to his subjects? He wills or chooses, that his subjects should act morally right rather than morally wrong, considering the acts in themselves; and at the same time, he wills or chooses, that they should act morally wrong, considering all things. He cannot express with truth his will or choice that they should act morally right, for he wills or chooses that they should act morally wrong. He cannot with truth express his will or choice that they should act morally wrong, for he wills or chooses that they should act morally right. Let him express either of the supposed wills in the form of law, and he is convicted of falsehood by the existence of its opposite; which shows the supposition of these two wills to be an absurdity. The doctrine of two wills on the part of a lawgiver, as now presented, is a simple absurdity, though extensively maintained by infidels, universalists, and by some of worthier name. If his law is his will, it expresses his preference of the action required to its opposite, all things considered.

5. The law of a perfect moral government implies, that the lawgiver can be satisfied with obedience, and with nothing but obedience on the part of subjects. The law of such a government is, as we have seen, an unqualified expression of the lawgiver's preference of the action required to its opposite, all things considered. As a lawgiver, so far as any thing on the part of subjects is concerned, he must be satisfied either with their obedience or disobedience. As willing or preferring the former rather than the latter, he must be satisfied with the former, and dissatisfied with the

latter. To suppose otherwise, is to suppose him to be dissatisfied when his will is done, and satisfied when his will is not done but crossed and thwarted; which is the absurdity of supposing him dissatisfied when satisfied, or satisfied when dissatisfied.

Again; the preference of a perfect moral governor expressed in his law, is a preference of the indispensable means of the best end, to the sure means of the worst end. The former is as excellent and valuable--as much to be desired as the end of which it is the means. The latter is as odious and abominable--as much to be abhorred as the end of which it is the means. If the former--obedience, does not take place on the part of subjects, then the latter takes place on their part. And if a perfect moral governor is not satisfied with the former, then he must be satisfied, if at all, with the latter, i.e., he must be satisfied with that which he regards as odious and abominable, even with the means of the worst conceivable end. The absurdity is obvious.

The same thing may be viewed in another light. The action required by his law, is either the best thing which can be required of subjects, or something else is better, or something else is as good. If it is the best thing, then a perfect moral governor must be satisfied with it, and with nothing else on the part of subjects; since otherwise, he would be without benevolence, and of course without authority. If something else is better than obedience to law, then also, as not requiring the best thing he is destitute of benevolence, and of course, destitute of authority. If something else is as good, then he expresses a false or groundless preference in his law, and is of course destitute of the only character which can invest him with authority.

Again; if that which is required by the law, is not the only thing on the part of the subject which will satisfy the lawgiver, then the question what will satisfy him or whether any thing will, is left wholly undetermined. On this most momentous of all questions, all is uncertainty and doubt; or rather deception and falsehood. None but a malignant being could fail to put this question at rest, in the view of his subjects. I need not say, that in such a

case, neither law nor moral government could exist. Or, if we suppose that the moral governor can be satisfied with any thing but obedience on the part of subjects, then by his law he furnishes no reason to his subjects, why they should obey rather than disobey his law. Nothing appears to show that he cannot be satisfied with something on their part which is not obedience--something which he does not claim in his law; that he will not accept of a substitute for obedience--some equivalent on the part of subjects. He thus abandons all claim for obedience, and adopts the principle, that one thing or another, any thing or nothing will satisfy him. No rule of action--no law can exist in such a case.

Further; the same thing will be still more apparent, if we advert to the grounds or reasons for satisfaction with obedience on the part of the governor, and to the grounds or reasons for dissatisfaction on his part with disobedience. In respect to obedience, the grounds of satisfaction are two: first, obedience is the means of the highest well-being of the whole community, and of the obedient subject; secondly, another ground of satisfaction with the obedient subject is, that, by his obedience he perfectly honors the law and fully supports the authority of the moral governor. Nothing on the part of the subject can amount to such a perfect recognition of the rightful authority of him who reigns, as the perfect obedience of the subject. This gives to the law its highest honors, and to the authority of the governor that homage which enthrones him in absolute dominion. Thus in the two respects specified--the entire object and end--all that a perfect moral governor can propose or desire from his subjects, is fully accomplished, and perfect benevolence is perfectly by their obedience.

In respect to disobedience, the grounds of dissatisfaction are two. One is, that it tends to destroy the highest well-being, and to produce the highest misery of the community and of the disobedient subject. Disobedience to a perfect law is selfishness. This as a principle of action, or rather as itself action, tends to the destruction of the highest well-being and the production of the high misery in others and in its subject. Such action must, of course, be the object of high dissatisfaction to a benevolent or perfect moral governor. I say nothing here concerning reconciliation with

the transgressor through an atonement. I only say, that with his character as a transgressor, and the enemy of the highest well-being of all, a perfect moral governor must be, in a high degree, dissatisfied. The other ground of dissatisfaction with the transgressor is, that by his act of transgression, he has done what he can to destroy, and that which uncounteracted in its true tendency, must destroy the authority of the moral governor. Actions, in familiar phrase, speak louder than words. The act of disobedience says, in a manner the most unequivocal, the law is not to be obeyed--the authority of the moral governor is to be disregarded, and himself esteemed worthy only of unqualified contempt. The transgressor does what he can therefore, to bring into contempt, and thus to prostrate, and if nothing be done to counteract the true tendency of his act, he does what must effectually prostrate all law and all authority. Who would or could respect a king, who either from weakness, approbation, or policy, should acquiesce in the open rebellion of a single subject, trampling on his law and confronting his authority with undisguised contempt? Suppose every subject thus to defy his authority, and the triumphant shout of rebellion to go throughout his empire, what is there of law, authority, or government remaining? Nothing. And the reason is, that the act of transgression is a declaration and a proof that the lawgiver, his law, and authority, are unworthy of regard. It places the foot of rebellion on all that can be called authority, and all that is authority in the dust, with the acquiescence of the moral governor. The proof is decisive; the conclusion is not merely authorized but required, either that he is incompetent or indisposed to uphold the best law, or both; and of course that he has no right to reign, and is entitled to no submission. The principle is the same in respect to a single instance of disobedience, considered as testimony. It gives the same testimony. It establishes the same fact--that so far as authority is concerned, there is none. For what is done once may be done again; what is done by one may be done by all. The governor's acquiescence is the result either of weakness, of timidity, of indifference, of approbation, or of a selfish policy, and a single act of transgression acquiesced in by him proves this. Such an act therefore, in the very nature of the case subverts all authority. We may indeed imagine that a moral governor should maintain his place on his throne by dint of power. We may suppose him to express due disapprobation of all other transgressors but one. But if he fails to do this in respect to one transgressor and so treats him with favor, under a merely legal system, his authority is gone--subverted. He shows the

partialities of favoritism, and these subvert authority if any thing can. They show him to be wanting in principle, and therefore wholly destitute of that character which gives the right to rule; they show that he is as truly the friend of the disobedient as of the obedient--that he does not regard obedience to the best law as the indispensable means of the best end, and disobedience to it as the sure means of the worst end. Thus disobedience, without his disapprobation, subverts his authority, and he acquiesces in the result. What right has he to reign?

It may here be said, that under human governments, acts of disobedience often occur without detection, and that even subjects who are convicted as offenders are often pardoned, and yet the authority of law is not subverted. This may be admitted. But why is not the authority of law in these cases subverted? Is it because the principle now stated is not true? Or is it because every such government does what it can and shows itself determined to do what it can, consistently with its own weakness and imperfection, to counteract the tendency of transgression, by upholding its authority in the punishment of the guilty and the protection of the innocent? The latter is the reason. In proof of it, let us suppose a civil ruler to possess knowledge and power fully adequate to detect and to punish without error and mistake, every offender against the fundamental law of the state, could he refuse to do it--could he refuse and be known to refuse to arrest the traitor and bring him to punishment, and yet sustain his authority in the view of his subjects? Could treason be thus left to walk abroad in the face of day, Untouched, uncounteracted in its tendency, and the authority of the king not be subverted? What sort of justice and what sort of authority could belong to such a ruler, suffering rebellion thus to trample on law? He would be virtually employing his power to protect the traitor, and so become his accomplice in crime. In respect to the pardoning prerogative in human governments, whence is it? It rests solely on the ground of fallibility in the administration of justice. If we suppose the infallibility of omniscience, giving absolute security that the innocent shall not be punished instead of the guilty, the pardoning prerogative under civil law would be, or ought to be, unknown. There could be no pretense for it; for what sort of justice would that be, which should punish some or many offenders and not punish another known to be equally guilty? The act of remitting penalty in respect to a convict

under a merely legal system, must either rest on the presumption of his innocence, or be an outrage on law. Thus every human government, though necessarily imperfect in the hands of an imperfect administrator, distinctly recognizes the principle of doing all it can do to sustain its authority, by counteracting the tendency of transgression to destroy it. By thus doing all it can do for this purpose, it shows that it would do more if it could, and thus avoid the very imperfections that mar its administration. It shows that, in its own estimation, the transgression of law in its true tendency is the subversion of all law and of all authority, by doing all it can do to counteract this tendency. It thus recognizes, and therefore fully establishes, that very principle of a perfect moral government which it is supposed to disprove.

If it should here be said, that in many instances human governments do not do what they can nor show that they are disposed to do what they can, to sustain their authority in the sense now maintained, and that still their authority is recognized, I answer that in this view of a human government, all that can be called authority is in truth mere appearance. Language is used in these, as it is in many other cases, as if that which it denotes had an actual existence, when it has not. It is merely the language of appearance, and the thing when duly reflected upon, is seen to be a mere quasi authority thing imagined or supposed. Authority is recognized in words, and even in unreflecting thought and action; as when we speak of the rising and setting of the sun, or of the sweetness of sugar, or the coldness of ice, as properties of these things which resemble our sensations. As in these cases so in the present case, by reflection, the error is easily and surely detected and the opposite truth fully recognized. If in such cases rulers and subjects seem to recognize authority, it is at most only a recognition of something for the reality, which is not; while even this subserves the purpose of preventing the evils of revolution and of anarchy.

While the act of transgression then in its true nature and tendency subverts the authority of the moral governor, I now proceed to show that the transgressor cannot in any way, either by doing or by suffering prevent the actual effect. The whole force and influence of his act to

destroy the authority of the moral governor, may be said to lie in the fact that the subject has violated the claim for his obedience. It follows therefore, that there is no way in which he can prevent the actual subversion of all authority, except by satisfying the unsatisfied claim for obedience. Can he then by any thing which he can either do or suffer, satisfy this claim? Can he annihilate the act of transgression, or change it into an act of obedience, or cause it to be true, that he has not transgressed? This is impossible. Can repentance or future obedience satisfy this claim? Repentance or future obedience can at most only satisfy the claim in future. Were it otherwise, what would the law be? It would be in language and in import, not obey, but sin and repent, transgress and reform. This would be allowing present transgression on condition of future obedience. Can works of supererogation? These are out of the question, the continued demands of law being co-extensive with the powers of the subject. Can voluntary suffering? But voluntary suffering is not the thing which the law claims of the subject. The lawgiver threatens to inflict suffering, but no benevolent lawgiver ever claimed voluntary suffering as the duty of a subject. Voluntary suffering then cannot satisfy the claim. The law has but one claim on the subject, and that is, for his obedience. The lawgiver proposes nothing, aims at nothing, desires nothing, except his obedience and his happiness. How can misery be a substitute for happiness in the estimate of a benevolent lawgiver? To suppose this is to suppose him to say, "I am as willing that you should transgress and be miserable, as obey and be happy." Besides, the most that the transgressor can be supposed to accomplish either by doing or suffering, is to evince his present regard for the law. But he is bound to do or to suffer whatever can do this; it can therefore, only satisfy a present claim. Can punishment? But punishment is not the act of the transgressor, but of the lawgiver. It is not inflicted by him as a substitute for obedience. It is not an act of the lawgiver declaring himself as well satisfied that his subjects should disobey and be punished, as obey and be blessed. It is an act of the lawgiver designed, not to reform the subject and bring him to honor the law, not to retrieve all the evils of transgression and so to be an equivalent for the happiness it has destroyed, but to prevent simply one of the evils of transgression, viz., the subversion of law. It is simply the lawgiver's act, upholding his law and authority. What then on the part of the transgressor can satisfy the unsatisfied claim for his obedience? Nothing. By the act of transgression he has proclaimed that the law is unworthy of regard, and may be

trampled in the dust by every subject; and this testimony is decisive of the fact, it is *prima facie* evidence and uncounteracted by opposing evidence from the governor himself, authorizes and demands the belief, that the moral governor acquiesces in rebellion, that his law has ceased as truly as had a repeal of it issued from his own lips, and that he no more reigns with authority, than were he driven an insulted and degraded exile from his throne.

The conclusion then on this topic is, that the law of a perfect moral governor is in its very nature an unqualified claim for obedience on the part of every subject, and that whatever it may threaten, it claims of the subject nothing but obedience. It knows of no substitute or equivalent for disobedience on his part, nor yet on the part of the lawgiver himself; and therefore necessarily implies, that the lawgiver can be satisfied with nothing but obedience on the part of the subject.

6. The law of a perfect moral government expresses the lawgiver's highest approbation of obedience, and highest disapprobation of disobedience.

First. It expresses his highest approbation of obedience. By highest approbation, I mean not higher approbation than he may feel toward some other object, which cannot come into competition with this as an object of approbation. A perfect moral governor would feel as high approbation of the end of right moral action, as of right moral action itself. But by highest approbation, I mean, as high as he can feel toward any object, and higher than any which he can feel toward any of all the objects which can come into competition as objects of approbation.

The law of a perfect moral governor expresses as we have seen, his preference of the action required to its opposite, all things considered. This preference is of course an elective preference. It involves not only an act of will, but also affection, love, approbation of its object as it is in its own nature and tendency; and that degree of approbation which is

suited to the worth and excellence of the object. Obedience to the perfect law of a perfect being is as we have seen the indispensable means of the best end, even of the highest happiness of the individual subject and of all others. As such a means of such an end, it is as excellent and valuable, as much to be loved, desired, approved and sought as the end itself. At the same time, these objects--obedience and the highest happiness of all, can never come into competition as objects of approbation. A perfect moral governor therefore, must regard obedience to his law with as high approbation as that with which he can regard any other object, even the highest happiness of all. Such approbation is necessarily involved in the very preference which he expresses in his law, otherwise the preference expressed in his law is not what it must be--a preference of obedience as it is in its true nature and tendency--the necessary means of the best end. Can he then feel so high a degree of approbation of any other object, which can come into competition with obedience as an object of approbation, as that which he feels for obedience? This is impossible and absurd. To suppose it, is to suppose, that perfect benevolence should feel as high approbation or love for that which is neither the highest happiness of all nor the necessary means of it, as it feels for these objects--which is to suppose that to be benevolence which is not benevolence.

Again; the only object, which, under a moral government, can be conceived to exist and to come into competition with obedience as an object of approbation to a moral governor, must be some supposable degree of happiness with exemption from some supposable degree of misery or suffering, in case of disobedience. It is admitted that a benevolent being approves of happiness, and of exemption from suffering in themselves considered. But no happiness, and no exemption from suffering which are conceivable in case of disobedience, or connected with it or depending on it, can be so highly approved by a benevolent ruler as obedience to a perfect law. Suppose what else we may, so long as obedience does not exist, the necessary means of the best end does not exist, nor the best end itself. Of course nothing exists or can exist without obedience, of which a benevolent ruler can so highly approve and love as obedience to his law. The expression of his preference in his law therefore, being an expression of his approbation of

obedience as it is, is an expression of his highest approbation of obedience.

This reasoning might be further enforced by considering obedience in its particular relations as the means of the highest well-being of all. Such it is, not merely in its direct tendencies to produce the highest happiness of the obedient and of all others, but also in all its indirect tendencies. Not however to specify these, I only advert to one of them already stated--its tendency to support the authority of the moral governor. The obedience of his subjects is the testimony and the homage of every intellect and every heart, to his perfect qualification to reign; and pre-eminently enthrones him in rightful dominion. This is "the column of true majesty" in kings. When obedience exists, all exists that a perfect moral governor can propose or desire in respect to himself and his subjects. And this he tells them in the preference the will given forth in his law. What other object can he so highly approve?

Secondly. The law of a perfect moral governor expresses his highest disapprobation of disobedience. By the highest disapprobation, I mean as high as he can feel toward any object, and higher than any which he can feel toward any of all the objects which can come into competition as objects of disapprobation. This is necessarily involved in the preference expressed in his law. This preference of the action required to its opposite involves aversion, hatred, disapprobation toward the opposite as it is in its true nature and tendency. It involves a degree of disapprobation, which is suited to the degree of turpitude and odiousness in disobedience. Now disobedience to the law of a perfect moral government, in its true nature and tendency, is the sure means of the worst end even of the highest misery of the subject and of all others. As such a means of such an end, it is as odious as fit to be abhorred and disapproved as the end itself. These objects however, disobedience and the highest misery of all, can never come into competition as objects of disapprobation. A perfect moral governor therefore, must regard disobedience with as high disapprobation as that with which he can regard the highest misery of all. Such disapprobation of disobedience is involved in the very preference expressed in his law. For this preference

involves aversion, hatred, disapprobation of disobedience as it is in its true nature and tendency, that is as the means of the highest misery of all. Can he then feel so high a degree of disapprobation toward any other object which can come into competition with disobedience as an object of disapprobation, as he must feel toward disobedience? This is impossible. To suppose it is to suppose, that a being of perfect benevolence should feel as high disapprobation toward that which is neither the highest misery of all nor the means of it, as he feels toward these objects; which is to suppose a perfectly benevolent being, who is not perfectly benevolent.

This view of the subject is confirmed by considering the specific tendency of disobedience to destroy the authority, of the governor. It not only tends as a kind of action to produce the highest misery of all, but as we have seen, it tends to subvert the authority of law and government, and thus to demolish the necessary and only security and safeguard against this fearful issue. Intent on its work of ruin, it storms and raises to the foundation the only citadel of defense and protection, that it may extend its desolations unhindered and unmolested. It thus destroys the last hope and refuge of benevolence itself; forcing it to yield its authority and its designs to the ravages of fell malignity. What object so fit to be abhorred? What can be called law, which does not express supreme abhorrence of transgression? What lawgiver can be entitled to respect, who does not express in his law the highest disapprobation of this deed of death--this worst of evils as a cause an evil equaled only by its appropriate effect, the absolute wretchedness of all? Thus, when disobedience exists, all exists that a perfect moral governor can deprecate, disapprove and abhor as the cause of evil and the source of woe. It is hostility and defeat to his entire and only design. It crosses and frustrates his only will--his whole will as given forth in his law. What other object can he so highly disapprove and abhor?

LECTURE V: The law of a perfect Moral Government involves sanctions.

V. A perfect Moral Government involves the exercise of authority through the medium of law. The nature of such a law further unfolded. -- 7. The

law of a perfect Moral Government involves sanctions. -- The relations of a Moral Governor to his kingdom more particularly considered. -- Legal sanctions defined. -- They establish or ratify the authority of the Moral Governor. -- They consist in natural good promised to obedience, and in natural evil threatened to disobedience. They establish the Moral Governor's authority as its decisive proof. -- They become decisive proof of the Moral Governor's authority by manifesting his benevolence in the form of his highest approbation of obedience, and highest disapprobation of disobedience. -- It is not incredible that God in the Scriptures, should express his highest approbation of obedience and his highest disapprobation of disobedience to His law.

IN preceding lectures, after defining a perfect moral government in general terms, I entered on the inquiry, What is the law of a perfect moral government? In answer to this inquiry, I attempted to show that such a law is a decisive rule of action to subjects; that it must require benevolence as the best kind of action, and forbid selfishness as the worst kind of action conceivable on the part of subjects; that it requires benevolence as the sum of obedience, and forbids selfishness as the sum of disobedience on the part of subjects; that it expresses the lawgiver's preference of the action required to its opposite, all things considered; that it implies that the lawgiver can be satisfied with obedience and with nothing but obedience on the part of subjects; that it expresses the lawgiver's highest approbation of obedience, and highest disapprobation of disobedience on the part of subjects.

Continuing these remarks concerning the nature of law, I proceed to say,

Seventhly: That the law of a perfect moral government involves sanctions.

In treating of this important and much controverted part of our subject, I propose to unfold the nature, the necessity, and the equity of legal sanctions in relation to the authority of the moral governor. Before however entering directly on these topics, I deem it important to consider more particularly than I have done, the relation which the moral governor

sustains to his kingdom, the qualifications for the office, especially the moral character which he must possess and manifest as the ground of his authority, and also the mode of manifesting his qualifications to his subjects.

Assuming then what is now properly assumed, that a perfect moral government is the best means of the best end, and therefore dictated and demanded by benevolence, I remark --

That a moral governor sustains a peculiar relation to his kingdom--a relation distinguished from every other by its peculiar object or end, and also by its peculiar function. Every relation of every moral being toward other moral beings which is dictated and demanded by benevolence, has its peculiar object or end, and hence also its peculiar function, or what are called in most cases its peculiar duties, including those acts or doings, or some general comprehensive mode of acting necessary to the accomplishment of the peculiar object or end of the relation. Accordingly, benevolence in a moral governor, while it aims at the highest happiness of all, is also committed to another great object or end which is peculiar to his relation, viz., to secure to the extent of his power, right moral action, and to prevent wrong moral action on the part of his subjects, by means peculiar to the relation of a moral governor. I say that benevolence is committed--pledged--in its very nature, and from the nature of this relation, to accomplish, as far as possible, this end by these means. Under a system of moral government, as I have before said, all--all depends on action. On the right and wrong moral action of its subjects depend its issues in happiness or misery. The weal or woe of the moral kingdom depends therefore, on what the moral governor does or fails to do, to secure right and to prevent wrong moral action on the part of his subjects. To secure right moral action with its results in happiness, and to prevent wrong moral action with its results in misery, by the peculiar influence of a perfect moral government, must be the grand object or end, and compared with any thing which can come into competition with it, must be the supreme object or end of a perfect moral governor. He may care for and promote individual well-being, only so far as this shall be consistent with securing the greatest amount possible to him of right

moral action, as the means of the highest happiness of his kingdom by the peculiar influence of a perfect moral government. But to the accomplishment of this end BY THIS MEANS, every thing which interferes with it must be sacrificed; and every thing which is necessary to the accomplishment of this end by THIS MEANS must be done, or the great end of benevolence must be defeated. To accomplish this particular end then--to secure the greatest amount of right moral action which he can secure, as that which is necessary to the highest well-being of all, by that influence which is peculiar to his relation as a moral governor, is the entire function of his office. A moral governor therefore from the very nature of his relation as a benevolent being, is under the necessity not merely of aiming to produce the highest happiness of his kingdom, but of aiming to produce it by securing the greatest amount of right moral action. Nor is he as some vainly imagine, under the necessity merely of aiming to produce the highest well-being of his kingdom by securing the greatest amount of right moral action which he can secure; but he is under the necessity of aiming to produce the highest amount of right moral action which he can secure by the peculiar influence of a perfect moral government.

What then is the peculiar influence of a perfect moral government? It is we have already seen, the single influence of authority--of that right to command which imposes an obligation to obey. This is that peculiar essential influence of a perfect moral government, without which such a government can have no existence. If right moral action can take place under other influences, it cannot take place as obedience to a moral governor "without the influence of his authority on the subject. Other influences may be combined with this influence, not to say must be combined with it, from the very condition of all moral beings. But such other influences are entirely distinct from this influence, and though necessary to its existence, they are no part of it. They may exist without this influence; but when this influence does not exist, moral government does not exist. Right moral action done under the direct influence of natural good and evil as merely so much motive and without any regard to the will of another, is not done in submission to authority, and therefore is not obedience to a moral governor. Wrong moral action not done in rejection of authority, is not disobedience to a moral governor. The only

influence by which one acting simply in the relation of a moral governor can control, or attempt to control the conduct of others as his subjects, is the single influence of authority. To suppose a moral governor therefore without authority, is to suppose a moral governor without the least governing influence, and is the absurdity of supposing one to possess an influence which he does not possess--of supposing a moral governor who is not a moral governor. When therefore there is no authority, there can be neither obedience nor disobedience to a moral governor--neither a moral government nor a moral governor. Authority then--the right to command which imposes an obligation to obey--is the peculiar, essential, constituting influence of moral government; so that where this influence exists moral government exists; and where this influence does not exist moral government does not exist.

Again; the authority of the moral governor--that right to command which imposes an obligation to obey--depends on his competence and disposition to govern in the best manner; that is, on his knowledge and power as qualifying him, and on his benevolence as disposing him to govern in the best manner, and on the decisive manifestations of these qualifications and this character to his subjects.

That the moral governor's authority depends on the knowledge and power which qualify him to govern in the best manner, and on the full manifestation of these qualifications for his office, is too obvious to be denied. These qualifications not manifested to the conviction of his subjects, would be in respect to constituting any part of the ground of his authority, as though they were not; and who can suppose that ignorance and imbecility can give that right to command which imposes an obligation to obey?

The qualifications of knowledge and power admit of different modes of manifestation in different cases--modes which are peculiar to these attributes, when compared with that of manifesting a perfect moral character. In that Being who possesses omniscience and almighty power, these attributes are abundantly manifested by his works of creation.

Essential however, as the existence and the full manifestation of these qualifications are to the authority of the moral governor, it is in no respect necessary or important to my present purpose to dwell on either, since the existence and the manifestation of them in a moral governor in no respect depend on legal sanctions. Legal sanctions, whatever may be their nature, their relations or their necessity, can neither impart the requisite attributes of knowledge and power, nor be necessary to prove their existence. At the same time, if we suppose the moral governor to furnish the most abundant proof of his qualifications in respect to knowledge and power, this fact does not imply that he possesses the shadow of authority; for his authority depends not merely on his knowledge and power but also on his benevolence, and the full proof or manifestation of it to his subjects. If then legal sanctions have any influence in establishing his authority, it must be some influence on, or in relation to, the great question of his benevolence.

That I may hereafter exhibit what I consider just and adequate views of legal sanctions, I now invite further and particular attention to benevolence on the part of the moral governor and its manifestation as one essential ground of his authority.

It is then undeniable, that benevolence is one thing in the character, or rather that it is itself the character of the moral governor, which, in connection with the requisite knowledge and power, constitutes the essential ground of his authority. When it is once decided on sufficient evidence, that he possesses that knowledge and power which qualify him to govern in the best manner--so far as such qualification depends on these attributes--and if this be not decided, the fact of his authority cannot be established; then the fact, and the only fact which remains to be proved for the purpose of fully establishing his authority, is the fact of his perfect moral character--his benevolence.

In this fact is involved another. The moral governor who is truly or perfectly benevolent, must feel the highest approbation of right moral action, and the highest disapprobation of wrong moral action on the part

of his subjects. These particular emotions in view of the true nature and tendency of right and wrong moral action, are inseparable from the nature of benevolence in every mind.

Again; benevolence in the specific form of it now stated as the character of the moral governor, must from the very nature and design of his relation, be supremely concerned and absolutely committed to secure so far as he is able, right moral action in every instance, and to prevent wrong moral action in every instance by the influence of his authority. To accomplish this end by this means, is the great object of benevolence in a moral governor--the object by which this august relation is distinguished from every other relation. Benevolence on the part of a moral governor acting in this single relation, can be conceived to aim at no other object. The relation can be conceived to involve no other peculiar function than the accomplishment of this end by this means. We say then, that the grand, peculiar function of a moral governor is, by the influence of his authority, to aim to secure right, and to prevent wrong moral action on the part of his subjects. But if he who occupies the throne does not aim to secure right moral action, with the highest approbation of it as the means of the highest well-being of all, and to prevent wrong moral action, with the highest disapprobation of it as the means of the highest misery of all, then he is not benevolent--he does not possess the character which is requisite to his right to reign--he has no authority.

Besides, there is nothing in benevolence itself, on account of which it can be requisite to the moral governor's authority, except that it involves these feelings of highest approbation of right, and highest disapprobation of wrong moral action. Suppose benevolence to be any thing which it can be supposed to be, without involving the feelings of highest approbation of right and highest disapprobation of wrong moral action, and what is it but downright selfishness, showing no smile of favor for that which is the means of the highest welfare of all, and no frown of wrath for that which is the means of the highest misery of all? What is it but selfishness in the form of malignity, welcoming and conniving at crime and wretchedness, to subserve some private interest or purpose of its own? And what is there in such a character, to give to its possessor the right to control at will the conduct of others? Or soften the character as you will, if it does not involve the feelings of highest approbation of right and highest

disapprobation of wrong moral action, its possessor can have no will in respect to right and wrong moral action in accordance with their true nature and tendency--no preference of the one to the other as the one is the means of the highest happiness of all, and the other the means of the highest misery of all. Law as a rule of action, cannot with truth express such a will or preference. Its language is the utterance of falsehood. The lawgiver has no such will, no such preference as the very nature of law involves, and the very language of law expresses. Whatever then the thing may be, by whatever name it may be called--whatever amount of good it may impart in other relations; in a moral governor it is worthy only of execration and contempt. Call it benevolence if you will, but as the attribute of a moral governor, if it does not involve the highest approbation of right, and the highest disapprobation of wrong moral action, it can give him no right to reign -- no authority. Benevolence--benevolence in the form of the highest approbation of right and highest disapprobation of wrong moral action, is essential to the authority of the moral governor.

Nor is this all. The manifestation of benevolence in the form of the highest approbation of right and highest disapprobation of wrong moral action, is also essential to the moral governor's authority.

The grand and peculiar object or end of a perfect moral governor, is to secure right and prevent wrong moral action on the part of his subjects, by the influence of his authority. But his subjects cannot be reached by this influence and act under it, or rather the influence itself cannot exist, except as it results from a full manifestation of that character of the governor which is a requisite ground of his authority, even perfect benevolence with its feelings of highest approbation of right and highest disapprobation of wrong moral action. Indeed these feelings are as we have seen, those very elements of his perfect moral character, which constitute it an essential ground of his authority. It is obvious therefore, that the full and decisive manifestation of these feelings to the view of his subjects, is as necessary to his authority as the existence of the feelings themselves, or of the character which involves them. To suppose him to authorize a doubt in the minds of his subjects of this character and these

feelings, is to suppose him to authorize a denial of his authority. For what right to command can he possess in the view of subjects, while he leaves it with them an unsettled question, whether he feels the highest approbation of right, and highest disapprobation of wrong moral action.

We may view this topic under other aspects. Responsibility for actual results in the weal and woe of his kingdom belongs to the moral governor, so far as these results depend on his maintaining the influence of his authority. His business the grand function of his office, so to speak, is to secure, as far as may be, right moral action as the means of the highest wellbeing of all, and to prevent as far as may be, wrong moral action as the means of the highest misery of all, by the single influence of his authority. If the result in happiness fails, or if through wrong moral action the highest misery of all follows, in consequence of his failure to sustain and use the influence of his authority, the responsibility is emphatically his own. The highest happiness of all, and the prevention of the highest misery of all, so far as they depend on the existence and influence of his authority, are committed to his keeping. He is responsible for these high interests of his kingdom, so far as they depend on the influence of his authority. His concern is to maintain this influence unimpaired and perfect, be the sacrifice what it may. Nothing of equal value can come into competition with the maintenance of his authority. When it is once decided that a perfect moral government is the best means of the best end, then it is also decided, that the maintenance of the moral governor's authority is the best means of the best end. His only alternative therefore, is, either to betray his trust, and thus to forfeit his character and his throne, or to manifest those feelings toward right and wrong moral action, which are the essential ground of his authority. Or thus, the moral governor from the nature of his relation, is to be looked to and confided in, as the faithful guardian of the welfare of his kingdom by the influence of his authority. To secure to his kingdom the highest happiness by this influence, and to be confided in accordingly, is the sole purpose and end of his high prerogative. Is he worthy, and does he show himself to be worthy of this confidence in the view of his subjects? If so, then he must manifest those feelings toward right and wrong moral action, which as a perfect being he must possess, and the manifestation of which is essential to his authority. How else can his subjects confide in

that guardianship, which is to be extended to his kingdom only through the influence of his authority? What confidence can be reposed in one, who, for aught that appears to the contrary, is indifferent to the conduct of his subjects, on which the happiness or misery of his kingdom depends, or who is or may prove himself to be, so far as any evidence to the contrary exists, the friend and patron of wrong moral action? And yet this is the only just view of his character. Failing to furnish decisive proof of his highest approbation of right, and of his highest disapprobation of wrong moral action, he furnishes not the shadow of proof, that he would express these feelings, even should the expression of them be necessary to prevent the universal wrong-doing, and with it the universal and perfect misery of his kingdom forevermore. I do not say, that the expression of these feelings is necessary to prevent this result in his kingdom. He however, in the case supposed, can furnish no proof to the contrary by what he does as a moral governor. His own declaration cannot be proof, for as yet his benevolence is not proved. Of course his veracity is not proved, and is therefore justly questioned. There can therefore be no possible proof, in the view of his subjects in the supposed case, that the supposed result would not follow; and no possible proof that the moral governor, foreseeing the result, would in any instance express the specified feelings toward right and wrong moral action, were it necessary to prevent the direful catastrophe; no proof, that he would manifest the highest approbation of right moral action in a single instance, or the highest disapprobation of wrong moral action in a single instance, were it necessary to prevent his kingdom from becoming a pandemonium of sin and misery. He proves himself to be a selfish being; and there is not the shadow of reason to conclude, that he would not consent to and so become the responsible author of, the unmitigated and endless woes of his kingdom, rather than express the feelings requisite to prevent them, through legal sanctions. What authority or right to reign can such a being possess? Or thus, a being who has the right to reign as a moral governor, is a benevolent being, and has of course the necessary feelings of a benevolent being toward right and wrong moral action, the feelings of highest approbation of the one, and of the highest disapprobation of the other. Having this character with its necessary emotions toward right and wrong moral action, he will furnish the requisite manifestation or proof of this material fact; since otherwise he can possess no authority in the view of his subjects; that is, cannot use the necessary means of the great end of benevolence, or of the highest happiness of his kingdom, which

benevolence requires him to use. Benevolence no more requires him to aim at this end, than it requires him to use the necessary means of it -- than it requires him to manifest his highest approbation of right and highest disapprobation of wrong moral action. Or thus: to suppose a perfect moral governor not to manifest the highest approbation of obedience to the best law, and the highest disapprobation of disobedience to the best law, is a palpable absurdity. It is to suppose him to use the influence of his authority, an influence which depends wholly on the manifestation of these feelings, and yet that he does not manifest the feelings on which the influence thus depends; that is, it is to suppose him to use an influence which can have no existence and which of course he does not use.

Does the moral governor then establish and sustain his authority This question depends on another; does he fully, manifest his highest approbation of right, and highest disapprobation of wrong moral action; does he show that he regards the one kind of action as the means of the highest wellbeing of all, and as such, as valuable as the end itself, and the other as the means of the highest misery of all, and as such, as evil as the end itself? This is the grand problem. I say then repeating the question, does the moral governor show that he regards right moral action with supreme approbation, and wrong moral action with supreme disapprobation? Does he so prove it as not. to authorize a doubt of it? If he does not, then there is no proof of his benevolence and therefore no proof of his authority. There is proof to the contrary. Failing as the responsible guardian of the welfare of his kingdom fully to manifest these feelings toward right and wrong moral action--the highest approbation of the one as the means of the highest welfare of all, and the highest disapprobation of the other as the means of the highest misery of all--he decisively evinces the opposite character, and can make no claim or pretense to authority.

I remark once more, that the requisite manifestation and proof of the moral governor's benevolence, in the form of his highest approbation of right, and his highest disapprobation of wrong moral action, and in this way the requisite proof of his authority, must depend not merely on what

he does in other relations, but also on what he does in this relation. From inadequate views of the relation of a moral governor and the peculiar function of his office, it seems not to be an uncommon opinion, that he may by acts and doings in other relations, fully establish his character for benevolence; that, from his character thus established, may be inferred his appropriate feelings toward right and wrong moral action; and that in this way his authority or right to rule, so far as it depends on this character and these feelings, may also be fully established.

On this fundamental point it is readily conceded, that to the establishment of his authority as a moral governor, his character as manifested in all his other relations must be unimpeached and unimpeachable. It is indispensable to this purpose, that his acts and his doings in all his other relations, should not only be free from every thing which would evince the selfish principle, but consist in or include all the positive acts of beneficence which are demanded by his other relations. Otherwise he would furnish decisive proof against his benevolence, and of course against his authority. But it is now maintained, that these things--even the most decisive proofs of benevolence possible in his other relations merely--cannot prove his benevolence, and so establish his authority as a moral governor. They may furnish a degree of presumptive evidence--nay, the best evidence supposable in the case--of that character which entitles him to assume the relation of a moral governor. But no matter what proofs of his benevolence he may furnish in his other relations, they are not sufficient proofs of his benevolence, if in this relation he does not perform that appropriate function of his office which benevolence requires him to perform. To what purpose is it, that a being furnishes every possible proof of his benevolence in some or in many relations, if in another relation he utterly fails to perform the duties or functions which in this relation benevolence requires him to perform? All his conduct in other relations be it ever so unexceptionable, may be the dictate of the selfish principle; while his failure to perform the duties or functions of this relation, is decisive proof that it is the dictate of the selfish principle.

Now the moral governor sustains a peculiar relations relation widely different from every other, and involving a peculiar responsibility and a

peculiar function. He is the responsible guardian of a kingdom's welfare, as its Weal or woe depends on what he does, to bring his subjects under the influence of his authority, The grand and peculiar function of his relation or office is to bring this influence to bear on his subjects, that by it he may secure right and prevent wrong moral action, the one being the means of the highest wellbeing of all, and the other the means of the highest misery of all. The question of his benevolence therefore, depends not merely on what he does or has done in other relations, but also on what he does in this relation, Does he as the moral governor, perform the peculiar function of his office?--does he create the influence of his authority by what he does in this relation? If not--if he does not bring his subjects under this influence, so that they in acting must either submit to it or resist it, then he is recreant to the grand and only function of his office, and betrays the trust which he pretends to assume. He thus shows himself not to be benevolent, and of course to possess no authority. Benevolence therefore, requires him to manifest his benevolence by what he does in the relation of a moral governor, and in this way to establish his authority.

Nor is this all. Benevolence requires him also to manifest in his relation as a moral governor, his benevolence in that form which is peculiar and appropriate to this relation, viz., in its necessary feelings toward right and wrong moral action on the part of subjects. The happiness or misery of his kingdom depends on his showing himself to feel toward right and wrong moral action, as a benevolent being must feel. If he does not show these feelings, he shows himself not to be benevolent. As we have seen, all that there is in the nature of benevolence which qualifies him to rule and can give him the right to rule, is, that it involves these feelings and will manifest them, for the accomplishment of the great end of benevolence. If benevolence has any peculiar feelings toward happiness and misery, it must have peculiar feelings toward right moral action as the means of the highest happiness of all, and toward wrong moral action as the means of the highest misery of all. If benevolence requires the moral governor to make a full and decisive manifestation of his feelings toward the highest happiness of all and the highest misery of all, then it requires him also to manifest not less decisively its peculiar feelings toward right moral action, as the means of the highest happiness of all, and toward

wrong moral action as the means of the highest misery of all. But if he does not manifest his benevolence in its peculiar and necessary feelings toward right and wrong moral action, by what he does in his relation as a moral governor, he cannot manifest it at all; and the proof from this is decisive, that he is not benevolent, and can have no right to rule; nay more, that he is not willing to use the best and only proper means of securing the highest happiness of all and preventing the highest misery of all, and therefore is a selfish being and in moral character, nothing better than a fiend.

Thus plain is it, that a moral governor is under an absolute necessity of maintaining his authority in the view of his subjects, if he maintains it at all, by what he does in the relation of a moral governor; in other words, by manifesting in this relation his benevolence, in the form of his highest approbation of right moral action, and his highest disapprobation of wrong moral action on the part of his subjects. If he would use the peculiar and essential influence of a perfect moral government, the influence of authority--if he would establish his right to reign, he must appear before his kingdom as the unchangeable friend and patron of right moral action, and the uncompromising enemy and avenger of wrong moral action, showing that he loves the one as he loves the highest happiness of his kingdom, and that he hates the other as he hates the highest misery of his kingdom. He must appear in all the excellence and loveliness and majesty of this character, without a cloud or a spot to obscure its splendor. The glory of his rightful dominion must be as the sun shining in his strength.

In view of what has now been said concerning the relation of the moral governor to his kingdom, his qualifications for the office, and especially concerning the moral character which he must possess and manifest as the ground of his authority, I now proceed to the direct consideration of legal sanctions. My object is, to ascertain their nature, to show their necessity to the existence of law and moral government, and to unfold their equity in respect to the degrees of natural good and evil which are requisite to their design. For the purpose of presenting what I deem just and adequate views of the subject, I propose to define, in somewhat

general terms, the phrase legal sanctions, or sanction of law, and to explain and defend the several parts of the definition.

Legal sanctions then--by which I mean the sanctions of the law of a perfect moral government--consist in that natural good promised to obedience, and in that natural evil threatened to disobedience by the moral governor, which establish or ratify his authority as the decisive or necessary proof of it, by manifesting his benevolence in the form of his highest approbation of obedience and his highest disapprobation of disobedience, and which for this purpose include the highest possible degree of natural good in each case of obedience, and the highest possible degree of natural evil in each case of disobedience.

This definition may be fully comprised in the following particular propositions:

1st. Legal sanctions establish or ratify the authority of the moral governor.

2d. They consist in natural good promised to obedience, and in natural evil threatened to disobedience, by the moral governor.

3d. They establish or ratify the moral governor's authority, as the decisive proof of it.

4th. They become the decisive proof of his authority, by manifesting his benevolence in the form of his highest approbation of obedience, and his highest disapprobation of disobedience.

5th. They are the necessary proof of his authority, as being the necessary manifestations and proof of his benevolence, in the necessary form of his highest approbation of obedience, and his highest disapprobation of

disobedience.

6th. They include the highest possible degree of natural good in each case of obedience, and the highest possible degree of natural evil in each case of disobedience.

These several particular propositions I propose to explain and to vindicate.

1st. Legal sanctions establish or ratify the authority of the moral governor. If legal sanctions are things of any significance, they sustain this particular relation to law--they establish or ratify it as an authoritative rule of action to subjects. To speak of law as an authoritative rule of action, is only to say, that it is a rule of action given by one who has authority or that right to command which imposes an obligation to obey.

That which gives to the law of a moral government its binding force, or which constitutes its whole influence or character as a decisive rule of action, considered as the will of one which ought to be obeyed because it is his will, is the authority of the lawgiver or moral governor. Whether we speak of legal sanctions as establishing the authority of law, or establishing law as an authoritative rule of action, all that we can mean is, not that they constitute but determine or establish the fact, that it is the law of one who has the right to command--who has authority. The authority of law therefore its binding force or influence upon the subject, if established at all, must be established by establishing the authority of him whose law it is--by showing that he has that right to command which imposes an obligation to obey. This being done, all is done which can give force to law, or invest it in the view of subjects, with that characteristic which constitutes it an authoritative and decisive rule of action to them. Nothing can be, nothing can need to be established or sanctioned, for the purpose of giving to law all the binding force which law can have, except, that he who assumes the right to rule actually possesses and shows himself to possess the right. The peculiar influence

of legal sanctions then, is to establish or ratify, in the view of his subjects the authority of the moral governor.

2d. Legal sanctions consist in natural good promised to obedience, and in natural evil threatened to disobedience by the moral governor. By this I mean, that in respect to the matter of them, they consist exclusively in such natural good and evil. Whatever natural good and evil are as sanctions, and whatever else may be necessary to their being sanctions of law, they are the only things which are or can be sanctions of law. All men concur in calling natural good and natural evil annexed to law in the manner now specified, legal sanctions. Nor can this language be applied to any thing else, with the least propriety or truth. Other things which are not legal sanctions may be necessary on the part of the moral governor, that he may establish his authority by natural good and natural evil as legal sanctions. Other things may be necessary to this purpose, because the want of them would be proof against his authority, and thus prevent the promised good and threatened evil from sanctioning his authority, however adapted in themselves to the purpose. The impossibility that the moral governor should establish or sustain his authority by other means than by annexing natural good and evil to his law as sanctions, I shall attempt to show hereafter. He cannot do this as we have already seen, merely by furnishing the requisite evidence of his qualifications to reign in respect to knowledge and power. If in addition to this we suppose, that by giving the best rule of action, and by a blameless and kind deportment in all other relations than that of a moral governor, he does what he can without natural good and evil as legal sanctions, to establish and sustain his authority, still none of these things nor all of them combined can be legal sanctions; in other words, they cannot sanction his authority. Indeed this supposition is wholly inadmissible, for all these things may be done, and be justly believed to be done by a selfish being who of course can possess no authority. His authority could not be established by these things. When all this is done, more must be done, or there can be no legal sanctions. The best evidence of his authority must be furnished of which the nature of the case admits. But such evidence cannot be furnished without the promise to obedience of a proper degree of natural good, and the threatening to disobedience of a proper degree of natural evil. This is the evidence and the only evidence, which when any thing

else supposable has been done, determines--settles the question of his authority beyond reasonable doubt. The sanctioning influence then, whatever it is, pertains exclusively to natural good promised to obedience as a reward, and natural evil threatened to disobedience as a penalty. What is true in the nature of things however, may more fully appear hereafter. I now appeal to the universal conceptions of mankind, as evinced by the only authorized use of language. On this ground I claim, that neither the act of prescribing the best rule of action nor a blameless and kind deportment, nor both combined, nor any thing else except natural good as the reward of obedience, and natural evil as the penalty of disobedience, can with the least propriety or truth be called legal sanctions. The authority of the moral governor then, cannot be either wholly or partially sanctioned by other things than natural good as a legal reward, and natural evil as a legal penalty. If his authority is not fully and exclusively sanctioned by these, it is not sanctioned at all. Legal sanctions then in the matter of them, consist exclusively in natural good promised by the moral governor to obedience, and in natural evil threatened to disobedience.

3d. Legal sanctions, or natural good and evil as legal sanctions, establish or ratify the moral governor's authority as the decisive proof of it. The word sanction denotes a particular kind of evidence or proof, viz., that which is the decisive and necessary proof of that of which it is the sanction. I shall now speak of it only as decisive proof, proposing to consider its necessity hereafter. In some cases of moral evidence it is justly deemed too weak to authorize belief, at least for practical purposes. This may be owing to its intrinsic insufficiency, or to its being opposed to contrary evidence of the same kind. In some cases of opposing evidence of this kind, we speak of the balance of evidence or probability as in favor of what we believe. In come such cases of belief, the degree of our assent or the strength of our conviction, is not such as to exclude all doubt, or is at least less than it would be, were there no opposing evidence. What we believe is not fully or decisively established--there is not that ground for unqualified belief which there would be, were the evidence wholly uncounteracted by evidence on the other side. By decisive proof I mean, not merely a slight balance of probability, nor merely what may be called sufficient proof; but I mean that which implies

the absence of all opposing evidence or of all ground for doubt or hesitation, and which in its own nature, there being no opposing evidence, fully confirms and in this sense establishes or ratifies that of which it is the proof.

Now to every one tolerably acquainted with the use of language, it must be obvious, that nothing can be truly and properly called a sanction, except under the idea of it as a proof nor unless it implies, in the circumstances or case in which it is a sanction, the absence of all opposing evidence or proof, nor unless it is conceived to be a decisive proof, a proof which in its nature so establishes or ratifies that of which it is the sanction, as to remove all reasonable doubt. To illustrate by an example. The sanction of a treaty with this country, is the consent of the President and Senate. This consent is not only a proof of the reality or validity of a treaty, but a proof which implies the absence of all opposing evidence or proof, and which in its own nature establishes or ratifies, to the exclusion of all doubt, the reality or validity of the instrument or writing called a treaty. It is under this view of it as essential to a sanction, that such consent is called a sanction.

In accordance with this view of the nature of a sanction in one respect, I maintain that legal sanctions are the decisive proof of the authority of a moral governor. Or thus I maintain, that natural good and evil as legal sanctions, are that kind of evidence or proof of the moral governor's authority, which implies the absence of all opposing evidence, and which being in its own nature the best evidence of which the nature of the case admits, establishes or ratifies his authority beyond all reasonable doubt or hesitation. I do not say that natural good and evil, be the degree of them what it may, are legal sanctions in a case in which there is evidence from any other source against the moral governor's authority. On the contrary I maintain, that they cannot be legal sanctions, except in a case in which there is no such opposing evidence, and that therefore, as legal sanctions, they imply the absence of all evidence against the moral governor's authority. It is under this idea or notion of them as legal sanctions that they exclude all doubt of his authority, while in their own nature and tendency when thus uncounteracted by opposing evidence,

they establish or ratify his authority. With this explanation in view, I now ask, what can be more obvious in the use of language, than that natural good and evil considered as legal sanctions, are universally conceived of as the decisive proof of the lawgiver's authority? If as legal sanctions they prove nothing, then they sanction nothing; and how then, or in what possible meaning can they be called sanctions? If as sanctions they prove or establish any thing, it must be as we have seen, the authority of the moral governor. And how can they establish or ratify this, that is, confirm it beyond all reasonable doubt, except as implying the absence of all opposing evidence and as being in their own nature decisive proof of his authority?

4th. Legal sanctions or natural good and evil as legal sanctions, become decisive proof of the moral governor's authority, by manifesting his benevolence in the form of his highest approbation of obedience and his highest disapprobation of disobedience. Our object is now to show how or in what manner natural good and evil become decisive proof of the moral governor's authority. This cannot be, as we have before shown, by proving his qualifications for the office in respect to knowledge and power. These qualifications and the requisite proof of them must be presupposed. Nor can it be, except in a case in which there is opposing or counteracting evidence of any kind whatever. For what we claim and all that we claim is, that natural good and evil are legal sanctions, by being such in their true nature and tendency, as to be decisive proof of his authority, when in their influence as evidence, they are uncounteracted by opposing evidence. In this case, we say that they become decisive proof of his authority, by manifesting his benevolence in the form of his highest approbation of obedience, and of his highest disapprobation of disobedience.

While natural good and evil constitute the matter of legal sanctions, they do not, considered simply as natural good and evil, become or constitute legal sanctions. Natural good proffered or conferred, and natural evil threatened or inflicted, may sustain very different relations; and it is in respect to these different relations, that we conceive and speak of them as very different things. Natural good under one relation we call payment,

and under another hire, wages and the like. We call it reward also, as conceived of under very different relations. The word reward is often applied to the consequence of wickedness. Natural evil under one relation--that is, when inflicted with the design of reforming an offender, we call chastisement, discipline, and sometimes punishment; while evil inflicted with no such design is also often called punishment. What then, is the precise nature of a legal reward and of a legal penalty or punishment? What is the peculiar relation of natural good and evil as sanctions of law! And here, according to what has been already said, it is obvious, that to become sanctions of law, they must sustain some relation to law; and not only so, but in this particular relation to law, they must tend to secure or render effectual, by establishing or ratifying the peculiar and appropriate influence of law, which as we have seen, is its authority or the authority of the lawgiver. Here then we have a sure criterion by which to determine what causes natural good promised to obedience, and natural evil threatened to disobedience to be legal sanctions; viz., that they tend to secure and render effectual the peculiar influence of law--the authority of the lawgiver or moral governor--by establishing or ratifying this authority. What we now claim is, that they have this tendency as decisive proof of his authority, by manifesting his highest approbation of obedience, and his highest disapprobation of disobedience.

It will not be denied, that natural good promised as the reward of obedience, is a decisive manifestation of approbation of obedience, by him who promises it; nor, that natural evil threatened as the penalty of disobedience, is a decisive manifestation of disapprobation of disobedience, by him who threatens it. The promise and the threatening would be all which the case would admit of, prior to any acts of obedience or disobedience. If now we suppose the fulfillment of the promise in every case of obedience, and the execution of the threatening in every case of disobedience, the most impressive manifestation of the feelings specified is made which is conceivable. And yet the promise of reward, and the threatening of penalty prior to all acts of obedience and of disobedience, being all the evidence of which the nature of the case admits, are as truly decisive proof of the feelings specified, as would be the actual conferring of the reward in the case of obedience, and the

actual inflicting of the penalty in the case of disobedience. In either case, the feeling of approbation of obedience, and the feeling of disapprobation of disobedience would be fully and decisively proved to be real.

Nor is this all. The degree of natural good promised or conferred as the reward, and the degree of natural evil threatened or inflicted as the penalty, would be, in all just estimation, the criteria and measure of the degree of the feelings of which they would be the manifestations. When therefore, the natural good conferred in such a case on the obedient subject is such in degree as to manifest on the part of him who confers it, the highest approbation of obedience, and the natural evil inflicted on the disobedient subject, manifests on the part of him who inflicts it the highest disapprobation of disobedience, then supposing no counteracting evidence, the authority of the moral governor is established or ratified. He thus manifests the feelings which are essential to his character as a perfect moral governor. He thus decisively proves the fact and the only fact which needs to be proved in the case, viz. that he possesses that moral character which invests him with the right to govern--that is, with authority. Having already evinced, by their proper evidence, his qualifications in respect to knowledge and power for his responsible office, and having furnished by his deportment, his acts and doings, no evidence against his perfect moral character, he now proves what only remains to be proved--that he has the feelings and the character, and will act the part, of a benevolent moral governor. By thus showing through the medium of natural good and evil, his highest approbation of obedience, and his highest disapprobation of disobedience, he shows that he regards obedience to the best law as it is the best kind of action, and disobedience to the best law as the worst kind of action--the one, as that which, in its true nature and tendency, is the means of the highest well-being of all, and the other as that which in its true nature and tendency is the means of the highest misery of all. These are the feelings and the only feelings of benevolence toward right and wrong moral action. This decisive manifestation of them through the requisite degree of natural good as a reward, and the requisite degree of natural evil as a penalty, is therefore decisive proof of benevolence, and of course, decisive proof of authority. Indeed, suppose what other mode of manifesting these feelings and this character we may, if any such mode were supposable, how

feeble and unimpressive it must be, compared with that which would be made through that degree of natural good as a reward, and of natural evil as a penalty, which should be the expression of these feelings? How would any other evince that weakness of heart which would provoke contempt, when compared with the power and majesty of emotions which, for the sake of the highest universal good, express themselves in such results of happiness to the obedient, and of misery to the disobedient!

Thus natural good and evil as legal sanctions, become decisive proof of the moral governor's authority, by manifesting his benevolence in the form of his highest approbation of obedience, and his highest disapprobation of disobedience. They reveal his moral character, holding forth, in defiance of doubt, his perfect benevolence, in its essential emotions of love of right and abhorrence of wrong moral action. They show the full strength of his will, fixed on securing so far as may be, the best means of the best end, and on preventing so far as may be, the sure means of the worst end. Thus they bring out, in full and vivid manifestation, the glories of Him who occupies the throne. Removing all ground of doubt in respect to that character which gives him the right to command, they tend to secure the full force and efficacy of his authority in the confidential homage and unqualified submission of his subjects, and, with these, the perfect blessedness of his kingdom.

REMARK.

It is not to be thought strange or incredible, that the sanctions of the law of God, as these are presented in the Scriptures, should express his highest approbation of obedience, and his highest disapprobation of disobedience. Without here affirming that such sanctions are necessary to establish his authority as the perfect moral governor of his moral kingdom, I now ask, who can show that they are not necessary for this purpose? Who can show that the legal sanctions, which as we have seen, would fully establish his authority, are not necessary to establish it?

If this cannot be shown, then let it not be thought incredible that such sanctions are annexed to the law of that Being who reigns over the moral universe. The incredibility of this is further diminished, if we reflect that a system of moral government which includes these sanctions, includes the highest degree of influence to secure right and to prevent wrong moral action, which can be conceived to be essential to a moral government. Suppose what other system of moral government we may, it cannot involve much of the influence to secure right and prevent wrong moral action which this system involves. If any other system would involve decisive proof of the perfect qualifications of the moral governor in respect to knowledge and power, of the excellence of his law as a rule of action, and of his absolute perfection in moral character, so does this. But besides all this, and more than all this, the system now maintained presents motives in natural good and evil which admit of no parallel, and which bind the will to right moral action, not indeed by physical force, but by the most imperious necessity by which it can be bound--the necessity of right moral action to secure perfect happiness, and to avoid perfect misery forever. And more still. In proof that the action required ought to be done, and that its opposite ought not to be done, it reveals through these sanctions, the will of an infinitely perfect being, unveiling his infinite benevolence in its highest approbation of obedience, and its highest disapprobation of disobedience. Thus there is no truth and no evidence of truth, which can be employed to secure right moral action, and which can be supposed to be essential to a perfect moral government, which the system now maintained does not employ, and employ in the most impressive manner. There is no such truth in respect to God, and the creatures of God formed in his image, which is fitted to secure the great end of their being, which is not made known in its full power to impress and control. Pre-eminently by this system is God revealed--God, the depths of whose wisdom none can fathom--God, the thunder of whose power who can understand--God, in the enrapturing glories of his goodness, smiling his approbation of right moral action, and recoiling from wrong moral action in wrathful abhorrence! What majesty and awful love! More cannot be conceived. The universe of truth, of evidence, of motive, is exhausted to give every essential perfection which can be conceived to this system of moral government, and to hind the will of moral beings to secure their own perfection in character and in happiness. Who then shall count it strange, that God should place his moral creation under such an influence? Who knows--who can prove--

that this degree of influence is not necessary to the best results in happiness; and therefore demanded by infinite goodness? Who knows--who can prove that the highest blessedness of the moral universe--not to add also, the prevention of the perfect misery of all--does not require this manifestation of God through the medium of legal sanctions, that all may see and know what a friend he is to right moral action, and what an enemy he is to wrong moral action? Who knows--who can prove that the Book, which declares that an infinitely perfect Being employs such an influence for such a purpose, declares a falsehood?

LECTURE VI: The law of a perfect Moral Government involves sanctions, (continued.)

V. A perfect Moral Government Involves the exercise of authority through the medium of law. The nature of such a law further unfolded. -- 7. The law of a perfect Moral Government involves sanctions, (continued.) -- 5th. Legal sanctions the necessary proof of the Moral Governor's authority, as the necessary manifestations and proofs of his benevolence in the form of his approbation of obedience, and his highest disapprobation of disobedience. -- This shown by proving (1.) that legal sanctions are in some respect necessary as the proof of the Moral Governor's authority; (2.) that they are necessary for this purpose, as the necessary proofs of his benevolence; and (3.) that they are necessary proofs of his benevolence in the form of his highest approbation of obedience and highest disapprobation of disobedience. -- The (1) and (2) of these arguments are treated in this lecture -- (1.) Legal Sanctions are necessary in some respect as proof of the Moral Governor's authority. -- Argued from the import of the phrase legal sanctions; from the nature of the law of a perfect Moral Government; from the nature of a law or rule of action without sanctions; from the fact that conformity and nonconformity to a rule without sanctions would subvert the Moral Governor's authority. - (2.) They are necessary as proofs of the Governor's authority, as they are the necessary proofs of his benevolence. Reason given why attempts to prove the benevolence of God from the light of nature are so unsuccessful.

In the last lecture I proposed to show, that legal sanctions, or the sanctions of the law of a perfect moral government, consist in that natural good promised to obedience, and in that natural evil threatened to disobedience by the moral governor, which establish or ratify his authority as the decisive and necessary proof of it, by manifesting his benevolence in the form of his highest approbation of obedience, and his highest disapprobation of disobedience, and which include the highest possible degree of natural good in each case of obedience, and the highest possible degree of natural evil in each case of disobedience.

This proposition was divided into several particular propositions; the four

following of which I explained, and endeavored to support, viz.:

1st. That legal sanctions establish or ratify the authority of the moral governor.

2d. That they consist in the matter of them, exclusively in natural good promised to obedience, and in natural evil threatened to disobedience by the moral governor.

3d. That they establish or ratify the moral governor's authority as the decisive proof of it.

4th. That they become the decisive proof of it, by manifesting his benevolence in the form of his highest approbation of obedience, and his highest disapprobation of disobedience.

I now propose in this and the following lectures to show the necessity of legal sanctions, and for this purpose, to explain and prove the fifth of the particular propositions before stated, viz.:

5th. That legal sanctions are the necessary proof of the moral governor's authority, as the necessary manifestations and proofs of his benevolence in the form of his highest approbation of obedience, and his highest disapprobation of disobedience.

This proposition I shall attempt to establish by showing --

(1.) That legal sanctions are in some respect or under some relation, necessary as the proof of the moral governor's authority.

(2.) That they are necessary for this purpose, as the necessary manifestations or proofs of his benevolence, and --

(3.) That they are necessary for this purpose, as the necessary manifestations or proofs of his benevolence in the form of his highest approbation of obedience, and of his highest disapprobation of disobedience.

(1.) Legal sanctions are necessary in some respect or under some relation, as the proof of the moral governor's authority.

This will appear --

In the first place, from the import of the phrase, legal sanctions. I have already remarked, that the word sanction denotes a particular kind of evidence or proof, viz., that which is the decisive and necessary proof of that of which it is the sanction. I have attempted to show that it denotes a decisive proof--that is, a proof which implies the absence of all opposing proof or evidence, and fully establishes or ratifies that of which it is the sanction. I now propose to show, that it denotes a necessary proof of that of which it is the sanction. By this I mean, that it is that, without which there is not only no proof of that of which it is the sanction, but proof to the contrary. On this point, I appeal to the example already referred to. Without the consent of the President and Senate, there is and can be not only no proof of the reality or validity of a treaty between this nation and another, but there is decisive proof to the contrary. We may suppose the evidence of the fact in other respects to be what it may, still without the consent specified, no instrument purporting to be such a treaty can possess the least validity. On the contrary, the want of such consent is decisive proof of its validity. Thus plain is it, that the word sanction denotes that which is the necessary proof of that of which it is the sanction--necessary as being that without which there can be no proof of the fact or truth to be proved in the case, but must be proof to the contrary. Since then the genus, as logicians speak, is always included in the species, it follows, that legal sanctions, in the universal conceptions of men, are the necessary proof of that of which they are the sanctions. In the second place, the same thing is evident from the nature of the law

of a perfect moral government. It is essential to the nature of such a law, that it be, and that it be fully proved to be, an expression of the lawgiver's preference of obedience to disobedience, of his satisfaction with obedience and with nothing but obedience on the part of the subject, and of his highest approbation of obedience, and of his highest disapprobation of disobedience. But no possible proof without legal sanctions can be furnished, that it is an expression of such feelings. The moral governor may furnish all possible evidence of kind or benevolent feelings in all his other relations, he may prescribe the best rule of action in this relation, and all this may be prompted by other feelings than those of true benevolence; may be prompted by the feelings and purposes of a purely selfish mind. There can be nothing in the case to warrant the conclusion that he is not actuated by, purely selfish designs; nor that he has the feelings toward right and wrong moral action, which his law in words expresses. Rather, there is decisive proof to the contrary. As a perfect moral governor, he is as we have seen, under the necessity of manifesting these feelings; and as a benevolent being will manifest them. He cannot be a benevolent moral governor without having these feeling, nor without making a full and decisive manifestation of them. Not to manifest them therefore, is proof decisive that they do not exist. Nor is this all. This manifestation of these feelings toward right and wrong moral action must be made, as we have also seen, if made at all, by what he does in the relation of a moral governor. But he can do nothing in this relation, except give the best rule of action, annex sanctions to the rule, and execute them as occasion shall occur in the conduct of subjects. Merely to give the best rule of action will not make the requisite manifestation. This act alone is entirely consistent with selfish designs on his part. It is not the best evidence of the feelings of benevolence toward right and wrong moral action, of which the nature of the case admits, and therefore not all the evidence which the case requires. It is only when the proof from legal sanctions is added that the evidence becomes all that the nature of the case admits of and requires, and is therefore decisive. I am not now saying that legal sanctions will fully prove the lawgiver's preference of obedience to disobedience. Nor am I now saying any thing of the mode in which natural good and evil in the form of sanctions become the proof of the expression of such a preference. I am only saying, that without legal sanctions there can be no proof of such a preference on the part of the moral governor, that whatever else may be necessary, natural good and evil as sanctions are necessary to evince

the reality of those feelings which the language of law expresses, and that the want of such sanctions is full proof that such feelings on the part of the lawgiver do not exist; and of course that what is called law in such a case, if any thing can be so called, is not law; and therefore there is no lawgiver having authority.

We may view this topic in another light. The law of a perfect moral government is an authoritative rule of action. Can then a rule of action without natural good and evil as the sanctions of its authority, or which is the same thing, of the lawgiver's authority, be regarded as an authoritative rule of action? Is it in this sense a law? Plainly to promulge such a rule in the form of a command--to give it forth in the manner of one having the right to rule, claiming for it the majesty of law, and for himself the unqualified homage of his subjects, would be a burlesque on all legislation. Can a moral governor claim the submission of the will of every subject to his will, and furnish no evidence that he will reward obedience and punish disobedience; or rather furnish decisive proof that he will do neither! Do you call this a law--an authoritative rule of action? No misnomer can be more palpable--none more ridiculous. Is this performing the high function of his office? Is such a rule of action the only means which one standing before his kingdom as its rightful sovereign, and the supreme guardian of its welfare, must use to promote and protect the highest happiness of all? Such a rule would not only leave this great end, which he is bound to protect, unprotected, and show that it is wholly uncared for by him who is responsible for its protection, but it would be an invitation to wrong doing from the throne itself. For not to promise to reward obedience, and not to threaten to punish disobedience, is not only a pledge not to reward the one and not to punish the other, but virtually to threaten to punish obedience, and to promise to reward disobedience; since not to reward is in a degree to punish obedience, and not to punish is in a degree to reward disobedience. Such a rule of action therefore, instead of having the nature and tendency of law, instead of being adapted to secure the highest happiness of all, would tend to secure the highest misery of all. Who does not know this? Who would be governed, influenced at all, by a law without sanctions as an authoritative rule of action? Who would be concerned about doing or not doing the will of another, from whom to say the least, obedience has nothing to hope, and

disobedience nothing to fear? He gives no security, furnishes no evidence that the obedient shall be protected and blessed and the disobedient be punished--none that he will not reverse the treatment of the two classes, should his sinister and selfish designs demand it, or rather, he furnishes good reason to believe that he will reverse it. Who then could respect his character or his will, and regard him as entitled to exercise the prerogative of absolute dominion, who confide in him as the friend and protector of a kingdom's happiness, who submit to his will as law? He may in words, express kind wishes, and in form propound the best rule of action. He may show kindness in every other relation. But as a moral governor he shows none to his kingdom. He is recreant to the high function of his office. He betrays his trust as the guardian of universal happiness. He sinks the power and majesty of law into the weakness of ineffective wishes, and justly incurs the scorn and contempt due to unmasked hypocrisy. He thus defeats the great and sole end of moral government, and tempts his subjects to war on each other and himself, without the shadow of restraint from law and authority.

Again; a rule of action without sanctions, viewed in the most favorable aspect, is justly considered as mere advice. But advice be the form of it what it may, is not law. The difference between them demands consideration. Advice be it ever so wise and good, is a mere declaration of what is best to be done. It implies no will or preference on the part of the adviser of that which is advised to its opposite. It would still be advice, though attended with a preference of the opposite doing, and though prompted solely by sinister designs. Law is the most unequivocal expression of the unqualified, absolute will or preference of the lawgiver, that what is commanded should be done. Compliance with the one is discretionary on the part of him to whom it is given. He has the right unquestionable and perfect, to rejudge the decision of the giver, and is responsible to none for his individual judgment in the case. He violates no right of another merely by rejecting the counsel which is given. Compliance with the other admits not of a question, even in thought. Law decides--settles the question of what ought and ought not to be done, by superseding the right of all further inquiry. Its violation is the violation of a right the most sacred and inviolable of all rights the right to control that, on which the highest happiness of each and of all depends. Advice

whether complied with or not, involves in respect to him to whom it is given, not the least good or evil which depends on the will of him who gives it. Law enforces compliance by results in good and evil to the subject which depend on the will of the lawgiver, and which, while as motives to right reason, they must be decisive and final for obedience, reveal the perfect character and perfect will of him from whom it emanates. Advice carries with it no binding influence from the character or will of him who gives it, to the will of him to whom it is given. Law, instead of leaving compliance with its claim to the mere option, to the uninfluenced will of the subject, binds his will to compliance--not indeed by physical force or necessity, but by that obligation which is imposed by the right to command, the strongest influence by which the will can be bound. This, as we have seen, is the grand, peculiar, essential influence of law the influence of authority. But to prescribe a rule of action without sanctions, as the law of a moral government, is to give mere advice, which can possess no authority. It is to divest law of its peculiar and essential nature and influence, and to degrade it to a level with the counsels of imbecility, by committing the question of what ought and ought not to be done to the judgment and will of an equal. It is for the moral governor to disclaim, in the most formal manner, all authority or right to rule. It is an open avowal that he has not the character which entitles him to exercise the prerogative of dominion--that he is a governor who neither has nor can have the least governing influence. Surely a rule of action, a law without sanctions, involving such a palpable dereliction of all claim or pretense to rightful authority, cannot be an authoritative rule of action--cannot be the law of a perfect moral government.

In the third place, a law or rule of action without sanctions, is a decisive proof that the lawgiver, either by imbecility or by selfishness, or by both, is utterly disqualified to rule. As a proof on the question of his qualification to rule, it is altogether equivalent to refusing to reward obedience, and to punish disobedience, when they exist. In such a case, the moral governor cannot be supposed to be both competent and disposed to execute legal sanctions, for then he would execute them. He must then, either be both incompetent and indisposed to execute them--in which case he would be disqualified to rule in every essential respect--or, he must be incompetent and yet disposed, or competent and indisposed, to execute them. Now,

he is either able to confer a reward on the obedient, in the form of protection and favor, or he is not. If he is not able to confer a reward, then he is the subject of an imbecility which is an utter disqualification for office. If he is able to confer a reward then, by conferring none, he manifests no approbation of obedience, when the public good demands that he should, and when, were he truly benevolent he would manifest it by rewarding the obedient. He stands before his kingdom therefore, convicted of indifference, or aversion to obedience--to the very thing on which the highest happiness of his kingdom depends. He thus shows himself to be, not a benevolent but a selfish being, and of course to be utterly disqualified to govern. Again; he is either able to inflict a penalty on the disobedient, or he is not. If he is not, then he is disqualified to govern by his imbecility. If he is able, then by inflicting no penalty for disobedience, he manifests no disapprobation of disobedience, when the public good demands that he should, and when were he truly benevolent, he would manifest it by the infliction of penalty. He stands before his kingdom therefore, convicted of indifference to, or approbation of disobedience, the very thing which tends to produce the highest misery of his kingdom. He thus shows himself the unconcerned spectator of disobedience on the part of his subjects, or rather the open patron of disobedience, and the open enemy of the public good. He occupies the place of the only guardian of the public good, as this depends on his manifesting his highest approbation of right and highest disapprobation of wrong moral action. Indifference to either is unmasked enmity to the public good. His disqualification to rule on either supposition, is decisively proved. He gives a law without sanctions, and the fact must be traced either to incompetence or indisposition to execute sanctions, or to both. In either case, he is proved to be disqualified to govern. Legal sanctions then, are in some respect necessary, as proof of the moral governor's authority or right to rule.

In the fourth place, conformity and non-conformity to a law or rule of action without sanctions, alike disprove and subvert the moral governor's authority. Conformity to the rule in such a case would exist without a reward, and non-conformity without a penalty. Conformity to the rule takes place, in a case in which there is no proof of the governor's authority. The subject therefore, does not act in conforming to the rule,

from respect to his authority, or under the influence of his authority. He conforms to the rule for some other reason, and under some other influence. The fact is undeniable and notorious. It cannot be otherwise. The act of conformity is not only no recognition of the moral governor's authority, but as done, and known to be done exclusively under another influence, it is a distinct declaration, testimony, or proof on the part of the subject, that the moral governor has no authority. He acts just as he would act, for aught that appears to the contrary, were no rule of action prescribed. He thus disclaims all right in the author of the rule to govern him, and gives an open and decided testimony against his authority. Nor is this all. The moral governor, by conferring no reward, acquiesces in this disregard of his authority; for did he promise and confer a reward, there would be no proof from the supposed act of conformity that it was not rendered from respect to his authority, but the contrary. Indeed, it would be impossible in such a case that the subject should conform to the rule and not be influenced by his authority. The moral governor therefore, by conferring no reward, acquiesces in the subject's disregard of his authority, and so confirms the testimony or proof from the act of the subject. Thus the act of conforming to the rule, contemplated as an unrewarded act, augments the proof, and shows, beyond all doubt or denial, that the author of the rule has no right to reign.

The same thing will appear, still more strikingly, from nonconformity to a rule of action without a penalty. The act of non-conformity or transgression is, in its true nature, an open proclamation by the transgressor, that the character of the governor does not entitle him to the submission claimed in his law. And the proof in this form of testimony or declaration is decisive, provided the governor himself does not counteract it by opposing proof in the execution of penalty. What force or influence can there be or ought there to be, in the mere dictum of one--call it law if you will; what force or influence is there or ought there to be, in an expression of his will as his will, when there is nothing in his doings and nothing in his character to give it the least weight, or to entitle it to the least respect? Now it is in exactly such a case that the supposed act of transgression, or as we may suppose, a universal revolt, occurs. What is it as an act, and what is it as a testimony? As an act, it is one of open defiance of the moral governor--of absolute contempt of his want of

qualification to govern, and a decisive triumph of self-will over incompetence and usurpation. As a testimony, under what aspect does it present the supposed lawgiver except that of an utter disqualification to rule--as had infancy itself ascended the throne and given forth the law? The law and the lawgiver would be, and ought to be, despised. Rebellion would place its foot on his authority, and in a shout of triumph, seal its prostration. Nor is this all. The moral governor by inflicting no penalty, acquiesces in this contempt of himself and of his authority. He refuses to counteract the testimony furnished by the act of transgression to the fact that he has no right to reign. He thus confirms the proof furnished by the act of transgression; and so, the act as unpunished, utterly subverts his authority. Who does not know all this? Who does not know, that rebellion unpunished legalizes rebellion--that it hides from every eye the reality of a perfect moral governor, and covers with infamy him who pretends to exercise his prerogative; that it annihilates all possible evidence of his authority, and puts all authority in the dust? The proclamation of the rebel is, that the mandate from the throne is unworthy of regard, and the moral governor by his quiescent good wishes, confirms the proclamation, and authorizes rebellion throughout his empire.

(2.) Legal sanctions are necessary to establish the authority of the moral governor, as the necessary manifestations or proof of his benevolence. If the relation of a moral governor is anything, it is a relation distinguished from every other by its peculiar function. This peculiar function as we have seen, is to create and establish the influence of his authority, that by this influence, he may secure obedience to his will as the means of the highest happiness of all, and prevent disobedience to his will as the means of the highest misery of all. The influence of his authority depends on his moral character, on his benevolence, and on the decisive manifestation or proof of his benevolence. He can as we have seen, possess no authority in the view of his subjects, unless it is made evident to them that he is a benevolent being, and feels toward right and wrong moral action on their part as a benevolent being must feel.

The question then is, can he furnish the requisite proof of his benevolence, and of the necessary feelings of benevolence toward right

and wrong moral action, and in this way establish his authority, or right to rule, without annexing sanctions to his law?

Here it is readily admitted, that other things beside legal sanctions are or may be necessary, that the moral governor may establish his authority by legal sanctions. Supposing him to evince by the proper proofs, his qualifications in respect to knowledge and power, it may still be necessary to the purpose under consideration, that his deportment in all, his other relations beside that of moral governor, should be free from all acts of unkindness or injustice--from every thing which would decisively evince the selfish principle; and also, that it should be characterized by all those positive acts of beneficence which are demanded by his other relations; since otherwise he would furnish decisive evidence against his benevolence, and so against his authority. It may be necessary for the same purpose, that he should prescribe the best rule of action. His blameless and kind deportment in his other relations may furnish beforehand a degree of presumptive evidence of the character which entitles him to assume the relation of a moral governor. These things, provided the requisite sanctions are annexed to his law, may be said to furnish additional evidence of his authority; because his benevolence and with it his authority, being in this case established by the requisite sanctions, it is reasonable to conclude that what may proceed from benevolence does proceed from benevolence. But it is now maintained, that none of these things, nor all of them together, nor any thing else, can without legal sanctions, prove his benevolence, and so establish his authority. The question of his benevolence, as we have before shown, depends, not on what he does or has done in his other relations, but on what he does in the relation of a moral governor. If he would establish his right to rule, he must act benevolently in this relation as well as in other relations. Benevolence imposes on him a momentous function which is peculiar to this relation, the fulfillment of which is absolutely indispensable as the proof of his benevolence. Whatever his conduct in his other relations may have been or now is, if he fails to fulfill the peculiar and momentous function of his present relation, this failure is decisive proof that he is not a benevolent but a selfish being. Benevolence therefore, requires him to manifest his benevolence by what he does in his relation as a moral governor. It requires him to fulfill the

peculiar function of his office, which is, to create and establish the influence of his authority, by manifesting in his present relation his benevolence in its necessary feelings toward right and wrong moral action. If he would create and establish the influence of his authority, he must act the part of benevolence in his present relation; and if he would act the part of benevolence in his present relation, he must manifest the necessary feelings of benevolence toward the best and the worst kind of action on the part of his subjects, by what he does in his present relation. All that there is in the nature of benevolence which gives him the right to rule, or on which this right does or can depend in the view of his subjects, is, that it necessarily involves certain peculiar feelings toward right and wrong moral action, and that it does and will make a full manifestation of them in the moral governor, for the purpose of securing the one kind of action as the means of the highest happiness of all, and of preventing the other as the means of the highest misery of all. If then the moral governor does not in his relation as a moral governor, make a full and decisive manifestation of these feelings of benevolence, he cannot prove his benevolence, cannot fulfill the grand and peculiar function of his office, and of course cannot establish his authority.

To recur then to the question now before us; can the moral governor in his present relation manifest in any way, the necessary feelings of benevolence toward right and wrong moral action, and so establish his authority without legal sanctions?

Can he do this by mere professions of the supposed feelings? Such professions may be made by the most insincere and false pretender to benevolence, or rather, would be made in most cases, by the veriest usurper and tyrant. Who that ever claimed the right of dominion over others, did not profess to aim at the general good, and to require submission to his will only to promote this high end? I do not say that such professions are necessarily inconsistent with benevolence; but I say, that in themselves they are utterly insufficient as proof of benevolence: while the want of all proof from every other source, would, notwithstanding such professions, be decisive proof to the contrary. Mere professions of a principle of action in cases in which if it exist, it will show

itself in action, and in which it does not thus show itself, are ever and justly regarded as insincere and false. To say in such a case to a sufferer, (depart in peace, be warmed, be filled,) and yet to give nothing, is proof decisive of the want of the benevolent principle. So in the case before us. If there are acts which the moral governor may perform which would fully prove his benevolence, and which therefore he would perform were he truly benevolent, then no possible reason can be conceived for his failure to show himself benevolent by the requisite acts, except that he does not possess the character. Who would concede the right to govern to such a mere pretender to benevolence?

Again; there are strictly speaking but three acts which a being in the capacity or relation of a perfect moral governor can perform, viz., the act of prescribing the best rule of action; the act of annexing the requisite sanctions to the rule; and the act of executing these sanctions in cases of obedience and disobedience. These acts may be viewed as comprising all that he does or can do in performing the function of this high relation. In assuming this relation, he cannot reward obedience nor punish disobedience; for neither obedience nor disobedience can exist. The question then now before us is reduced to this: can he manifest the necessary feelings of benevolence toward right and wrong moral action by merely prescribing the best rule of action. We have already said enough to show that such a rule of action without sanctions, not only could not be an authoritative rule of action, but could not possess other essential characteristics of the law of a perfect moral government; that it would be the mere advice of imbecility; that it could not be regarded as the truthful expression of any benevolent feeling whatever on the part of him who should give it, but would amount to an open, palpable disclaimer of all authority. I do not say, that the act of giving the best rule of action is not necessary, that the moral governor may by legal sanctions manifest or prove his benevolence. But I affirm, that the act itself without legal sanctions, is not proof of his benevolence. He does nothing in this case which a perfectly selfish being may not be believed to do. He does nothing to show that he feels toward right and wrong moral action, as a benevolent being must feel; nothing to show that he truly prefers the best kind of action to the worst, or the highest happiness of all to the highest misery of all; nothing to show that he will befriend and bless the obedient

rather than the disobedient, or that he will not confer good on the latter, and inflict evil on the former to the extent of his power. He commits himself in no respect as the friend and patron of right moral action, nor as the enemy and avenger of wrong moral action. He refuses to do it when benevolence requires him to do it, and when were he a benevolent being, he would do it. He therefore proves himself not to be benevolent.

Again; if the manifestation of these feelings of the moral governor be made at all, it must be made by some act or acts, which are the appropriate and significant expressions of them, by some act or acts which shall be justly and universally regarded as such expressions of them. We have already seen, that by promising natural good to obedience, and threatening natural evil to disobedience in some supposable degrees, the moral governor in a case in which there is no evidence to the contrary, would decisively and in the most impressive manner conceivable, express the necessary feelings of benevolence toward right and wrong moral action, and so establish his authority. Such sanctions as we have spoken of, would be decisive evidence of these feelings, because they furnish the best evidence of them of which the nature of the case admits. I now say, that legal sanctions are the necessary evidence of these feelings on the part of the moral governor. What then is--what can be, truly or justly regarded as the decisive, ambiguous expression of his feelings of approbation of obedience and his disapprobation of disobedience, except either, when giving his law, the promise to reward obedience and the threatening to punish disobedience; or the actual conferring of a reward for obedience when it exists, and the actual inflicting of a penalty for disobedience when it exists. In giving his law, he cannot reward obedience nor punish disobedience, for there can be no obedience to be rewarded nor disobedience to be punished. If then he does not promise to reward the one, and threaten to punish the other, he does nothing and can do nothing, to manifest the necessary feelings toward the two kinds of action, nothing to show that it is not a matter of perfect indifference to him whether his subjects obey or disobey his law. By annexing no sanctions to his law, he furnishes decisive proof that he wills no consequences in good or evil, no results in happiness or misery to his subjects as obedient or disobedient, and of course, that he is not willing to use the least

influence in the form of motive, nor any influence arising from the expression of his approbation or disapprobation clearly and fully made, for the purpose of securing right and preventing wrong moral action, and thus securing the highest happiness of all, and preventing the highest misery of all. As a moral governor then, in such a case he can manifest no feelings, and of course no character, which entitles him to the least respectful consideration from his subjects. Whatever may be his claims or his professions or both, there can be no influence from his character to secure the one kind of moral action nor to prevent the other--none from his official prerogative or right to rule--none which would not result from the character of any other, even the most selfish being, who should make the same claims and the same professions--none in a word, to secure obedience and prevent disobedience to his will, because it is the will and proved to be the will of a perfect being.

Were obedience to exist, he would make no manifestation of such a will by conferring a reward. Were disobedience to exist, he would manifest no such will by inflicting a legal penalty. What then, shall be said of his moral character? Where in the view of his subjects is the proof of his benevolence? What becomes of the peculiar function of his office? He utterly refuses to do the very things, which his high relation as a moral governor, benevolence requires him to do, viz., to manifest his benevolence as a practical principle in its necessary forms of approbation of right and disapprobation of wrong moral action. He utterly neglects to establish his right to rule. He refuses to bring that influence to bear on his subjects, which is indispensable to secure the highest happiness of all, and to prevent the highest misery of all--the influence of his authority. Instead therefore, of manifesting his benevolence in its appropriate and necessary expressions, and so performing the peculiar function of his office by bringing this highest and best influence to control the moral conduct of his subjects, he betrays a character which entitles him only to execration, as a false and faithless protector of his kingdom's welfare. Legal sanctions then are necessary to evince the benevolence of a moral governor, and so to establish his authority.

Further; the same thing will appear if we examine some of the particular

ways or modes in which it may be supposed that a moral governor may evince his benevolence, and so establish his authority without legal sanctions. -- Vide LECT. VII., p. 128. It may be said or supposed, that a greater amount of obedience to the best rule of action might or would be secured, and with it a greater amount of happiness without legal sanctions than with them, and that in this way the benevolence of the moral governor and his consequent right to rule may be fully established. I answer, that by obedience in this case cannot be meant conformity to the rule involving submission to authority; for according to the supposition, the so-called obedience must exist as the proof of the governor's benevolence, and in this way as the proof of his authority. There can therefore be no manifestation of his character as the ground of his authority prior to the supposed obedience, and of course no obedience involving submission to his authority. On the contrary, he who should give the supposed rule of action, would as we have seen, instead of manifesting the character, the manifestation of which is requisite to his authority, manifest the opposite character, and so disprove and subvert his authority. By obedience then in the present case, must be meant mere conformity to the rule of action, or right moral action performed solely under the influence of the perceived nature and tendencies of moral action, without involving the least submission to, or respect for, authority. But to say that there might be a greater amount of right moral action without than with legal sanctions, is saving nothing to the purpose, since it may as well be said that there might not be. To say either, is merely to assert a natural possibility of things--a possibility which must always be admitted in cases of moral reasoning. The question is one of probability. And the probability of a greater amount of right moral action is greater, other things being the same, under a greater degree of influence to secure it, than under a less degree of such influence; while the degree of this influence is greater with legal sanctions than without them. Besides, our object in the present inquiry is not to determine the comparative excellence of different systems of influence. It is, to ascertain what is the nature of a perfect moral government under the general or universal admission, that there is such a thing administered by an infinitely perfect being over his moral creation, and that whatever else it is, it is the necessary means of the greatest amount of right moral action and of happiness. We have said enough already, to show that without legal sanctions there cannot be a perfect moral government. To say then, that a greater amount of right moral action might be secured

without legal sanctions than with them, is to say that such a result might be secured without a perfect moral government; that is, that the result might be secured without the necessary means of securing it; which is absurd. Thus if we view the present question as one of mere probability, all the probability in the case is, that there would be a greater amount of right moral action with legal sanctions than without them; while the fact that there would be, is fully admitted in the concession that a perfect moral government is necessary to the greatest amount of right moral action. But there is yet another view of this important topic which demands consideration. If then it be conceded that a greater amount of right moral action and of happiness would take place under the supposed system, and that its adoption would therefore be demanded by benevolence, still the benevolence of the being who should adopt it, could never be proved. It has already been shown, that neither his deportment prior to his assuming the relation of a moral governor, nor the act of prescribing the best rule of action, could be regarded as proof of his benevolence. Nor could the least degree of proof on this point be furnished by any degree of right moral action and of happiness supposable in the case. As I have already said, right moral action in such a case, must be performed solely under the influence of the perceived nature and tendencies of moral action. It cannot therefore be performed out of respect for the character of the lawgiver, and of course can furnish no testimony or proof of its excellence. There can be no connection between the right moral action and the character of the lawgiver. The former therefore can furnish no proof of the excellence of the latter. The amount of happiness consequent on such action can in no degree depend on the will of the lawgiver; for to suppose this, would be to suppose a legal reward in a case in which there is no legal reward. No possible proof then exists or can exist in the case supposed, that he who assumes the relation of a moral governor, feels toward right and wrong moral action, as a benevolent being must feel. Were he a perfectly selfish being, it is altogether credible that he should do all that he is supposed to do. Nor is this all. But by failing to show in his relation of a moral governor, the feelings of a benevolent being toward right and wrong moral action, he proves himself to be a selfish being. If then he is, according to the present supposition a benevolent being, he is benevolent in a case in which his benevolence cannot be proved, in which he acts contrary to the plainest dictates of benevolence, and in which therefore, according to the laws of evidence, he must be regarded

as a selfish being. In such a case, there could of course be no authority; nothing which could be called a moral government. I do not say that a benevolent being would not adopt the supposed system, if the greatest good required its adoption; nor that it would not be one kind of a moral system. But I say that it would not be a perfect moral government. Its influence would be simply that of the perceived nature and tendencies of moral action; and nothing more and nothing less than were there no lawgiver supposed in the case. There could not be the shadow of that influence which results from the law, the authority and the character of a perfect moral governor. He who should assume the supposed relation without annexing sanctions to his law, would have, and would be entitled to have, no more and no other influence over the conduct of his subjects, than any individual among them who should propound the same rule of action. The great object and end of the relation is to secure the highest wellbeing of all, and to prevent the highest misery of all, by securing right and preventing wrong moral action; and the great and peculiar function of the relation is, to secure right moral action, and to prevent wrong moral action by the influence of his authority--an influence which depends on the manifestation of that approbation of the one kind of action, and of that disapprobation of the other, which a benevolent being must feel. But without legal sanctions he manifests no such feelings, and thus proves himself to be a selfish being and destitute of all authority.

Again; it may be said, that a moral governor by promising a reward to obedience, though he threatens no penalty to disobedience, would prove his benevolence and so establish his authority. I answer, that the thing supposed is impossible. For how could the promise of a reward to obedience prove the benevolence of the lawgiver, while he left disobedience to go unpunished? How could he show himself to feel as a benevolent being must feel toward right moral action, without also showing himself to feel as a benevolent being must feel toward wrong moral action? All the proof of such feeling toward right moral action furnished by the reward, would be wholly counteracted by manifesting no appropriate feeling toward wrong moral action; or rather, to manifest no disapprobation of wrong moral action, would be to show indifference or approbation in respect to it; and no being who feels either indifference to or approbation of wrong moral action, can feel as a benevolent being

must feel toward either right or wrong moral action. But not to dwell longer on this topic. Make what supposition you will, if the moral governor confers no reward for obedience, he expresses no approbation of the only means of the best end, but rather disapprobation; and if he inflicts no penalty for disobedience, he expresses no disapprobation of the means of the worst end, but rather approbation.

In the one case, he virtually punishes obedience by withholding a reward; in the other, he virtually rewards disobedience by withholding penalty. Suppose then what else we may, if, in the capacity of moral governor, he does not annex sanctions to his law, and if he does not reward obedience and punish disobedience, his conduct must be traced to the selfish principle in some form. It may be selfishness in the form of caprice, despotic humor, favoritism, a spirit of self-aggrandizement, the love of applause, or of a weak, indulgent tenderness which sacrifices public good to individual happiness. But it is selfishness still, and not benevolence; for benevolence in a moral governor must feel, and must express, approbation of obedience and disapprobation of disobedience to the best law. Not to express these feelings, is not to show the necessary and due regard to the only means of the highest happiness of all, and the necessary and due abhorrence of the sure means of the highest misery of all. Not to do it, is to establish the fact that the moral governor is not himself governed by the principle of perfect and immutable rectitude. Whom he will reward, and whom he will punish, however it may be supposed to be decided by other considerations, is not determined by the perfection of his character. So far as this basis for confidence is concerned, the good have as much to fear as the bad, and the bad as much to hope for as the good. Perfection in character is wanting in him who occupies the throne. Obedience, as submission to authority--as that confidential homage and unqualified and joyous compliance in which the will of the subject goes along with the will of a perfect ruler of all, is impossible. There is no such ruler. The act of obedience, and the act of disobedience, alike in their true tendency and influence, disclaim and prostrate his authority, and the moral governor, doing nothing to counteract the effect, legalizes rebellion from one end of his dominions to the other.

REMARK.

We see why the attempts to prove the benevolence of God from the light of nature have been so often, not to say uniformly, unsuccessful. The fact I think will not be denied, that the arguments of the soundest theism on this most interesting and momentous question have been, and still are, in the view of many of the most acute and ingenuous minds, marred by manifest imperfection and weakness. Even many Christian divines confidently maintain that the moral perfection of God cannot be proved from the light of nature. My present design is not to trace minutely the defects of the arguments now referred to, but rather to present what I deem a fundamental defect common to them all, and which fully accounts for their inconclusive and unsatisfactory character, viz., that in these arguments the most important relation of God to his moral creation has been wholly overlooked in its true and proper bearing on the conclusion. And here let me not be misunderstood. I do not say that this important relation of God has been denied. It has been fully believed by every sound theist. But I affirm that, in the best conducted arguments on the subject with which I am acquainted, that no such account has been made of the relation of God as the moral governor of men as the exigency of the argument demands. If what has been said in the present lecture be just, the question, whether a being who assumes the relation of a moral governor is benevolent, depends on another, viz., whether the sanctions of his law manifest his benevolence in its necessary approbation of right, and necessary disapprobation of wrong moral action. But in what treatise or work in natural theology has the argument for the divine benevolence been made to depend on the relation of God to men as their moral governor--on the nature, principles and facts of this relation, and particularly on the sanctions annexed to his law? On the contrary, is not the uniform method of discussing the great question A God's moral character from the light of nature, after having proved his existence as Creator, and his natural attributes, to proceed directly to the proof of his moral attributes--that is, to the proof of his benevolence--without the least attempt to unfold the nature of his high relation to his creatures as their perfect moral governor? But if God sustains this relation to men and surely no sound theist will deny it--then manifestly it is the great, the

paramount relation which he sustains to them a relation to which every other must be subservient, even that of their Creator, and that of the providential Disposer of all events in respect to them. This relation of God to his creatures must therefore control and modify all the manifestations of himself to them, and especially the manifestations of his moral character. How can we judge of the moral character of any being except from his works, his acts, and his doings, their nature, design, tendencies and results? And how can we judge of these without understanding and contemplating the relation which the being sustains to other beings whom his acts and doings respect? Suppose you were to witness a parent inflicting chastisement upon his child in some of its necessary and severer forms, and yet were so ignorant of the parental relation as not to be able to comprehend, or so thoughtless as not to consider, the design of parental discipline; or suppose you were to see a surgeon amputating the limb of a patient, without a suspicion or a thought of the necessity of the operation to save the life of the latter; or to see the executioner of public justice inflicting the penalty of the law upon the murderer, wholly ignorant or making no account of the design of such infliction--how, in either case, could you regard the evil suffered as the dictate and proof of benevolence, or as other than the decisive proof of the opposite principle? So, if God is acting in the relation of a perfect moral governor of his moral creation, and if all his acts and doings are controlled and modified by this relation, to what purpose, without appealing to this relation and to his acts and doings as dictated and modified by it, shall we attempt to prove his benevolence or to judge for ourselves, or to lead others to judge of his moral character? On this supposition no wonder that all such attempts are vain. If we would vindicate the ways of God to man, we must understand, and lead others to understand, his relation to man as a moral governor. To represent him as merely the Creator of men, and the providential Disposer of their allotments, and in these relations aiming only to produce the happiness and to prevent the misery of his creatures irrespective of their moral conduct, when he is acting in the paramount relation of their lawgiver, and adhering to every principle of strictest equity in his administration, is to pour darkness on all his works and ways, and therefore on his moral character; while to contemplate him in his true relation--the high and august relation of a perfect moral governor--would light up all the dark paths of his providence, and cause all his goodness to pass before us.

That God is in fact administering a perfect moral government over this world, will be readily conceded by every believer in divine revelation. It is true indeed that there is no ground for the pretense that he carries this system of government out to its full issues in the present life. Still it must be admitted by all who receive the Christian revelation, that God in his providence over men in this world, in no respect departs from or violates a single principle of a perfect moral government; but that on the contrary, he so adheres to every such principle in his administration, that its perfection can in no respect be impeached or denied. Why then is it incredible that his providence, were it rightly read in the lessons which it gives us, should show us that he is administering a perfect moral government over this world, if not in the form of a strictly legal economy with some delay of its just retributions not inconsistent with its nature, at least in what, as we think, is far more probable--in the form of an economy of grace? If the word of God reveals him to us as our moral governor, exercising his rightful dominion through grace, why should it be thought strange that his works and ways of providence, well considered, should present him in the same exalted and glorious relation? Or rather, how can it be supposed to be otherwise? Can it be supposed, that in his works and ways of providence he contradicts the testimony concerning himself given in his word? Does his written revelation exhibit him to our faith in one relation, and his acts and doings in another? Is it credible, that his works when duly considered, should make no decisive manifestation of the character and the relation which he sustains to his intelligent creation? What shall be concluded, if his works furnish no confirmation of his declarations? What is this but contradicting in his word what he is doing in his providence? If the book of revelation reveals God administering over men a perfect moral government blended with an economy of grace, the book of nature the book that tells us what he is by what he does--if rightly read, must show him as the righteous Sovereign, and as the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

LECTURE VII: The necessity of legal sanctions shown.

V. A perfect Moral Government Involves the exercise of authority through

the medium of law. The nature of the law further unfolded. -- 7. The law of a perfect Moral Government involves sanctions -- 5th. The necessity of legal sanctions shown. -- (3.) because they are the necessary proofs of his benevolence in the forms of his highest approbation of obedience and highest disapprobation of disobedience. -- This is argued; first, from the insufficiency of another mode of proving his benevolence; second, from the nature of legal sanctions as already explained; third, from the view of the sanctions of the supreme law of the state. -- REMARKS: 1. Christianity is not a selfish system of religion; 2. What it is to make light of the divine threatenings; 3. They who deny the view now given of the Sanctions of a perfect Moral Government, cannot prove the benevolence of God.

IN treating of the necessity of legal sanctions in the preceding lecture, I attempted to show, (1.) That they are necessary, in some respect or under some relation, as the proof of the moral governor's authority; and (2.) That they are necessary for this purpose, as being the requisite proof of his benevolence.

I now proceed to show, as I proposed --

(3.) That legal sanctions are necessary for this purpose, as the required manifestations or proofs of his benevolence in the form of his highest approbation of obedience, and of his highest disapprobation of disobedience.

It has been shown that the moral governor is under the necessity of establishing by decisive proof, his authority, or right to reign; that he cannot do this without proving his benevolence, and that he cannot prove his benevolence and so establish his authority, by any thing which he can do in his other relations, nor by any thing which he can do in this relation, without annexing natural good and evil to his law as its sanctions. What I now propose to show is, that he cannot prove his benevolence, without annexing sanctions to his law which shall manifest his highest approbation of obedience, and his highest disapprobation of

disobedience; in other words, that natural good and evil cannot become legal sanctions--that is, cannot manifest the benevolence, and so establish the authority of the moral governor, in any other way or mode, except by manifesting his highest approbation of obedience, and his highest disapprobation of disobedience.

I argue the truth of this proposition,

In the first place, from the insufficiency of certain particular ways or modes in which natural good and evil are, or have been supposed to become legal sanctions, other than that now specified. Here I propose to examine such other modes than the one now specified, some one of which so far as I know, has been considered the proper mode. If natural good and evil cannot become legal sanctions in any of these modes, it is fairly inferred that they cannot in any other than that now maintained. I remark then,

That natural good promised or conferred as the mere dictate of individual kindness, cannot possess the nature of a legal reward; and that natural evil, threatened or inflicted as the mere dictate of individual unkindness, cannot possess the nature of a legal, penalty. In such a case, the lawgiver in annexing the supposed sanctions to his law, and also in their execution, can have no benevolent regard for the public good, and of course no such regard for the establishment of his own authority as the necessary means of the public good. His whole object in conferring the natural good, and in inflicting the natural evil supposed, terminates in the happiness and unhappiness of individuals as such, and in his own selfish gratification. This implies an utter disregard of the highest happiness of all, and of the necessary means of this end. It shows him to be utterly regardless of the function of his high relation, and recreant to his high trust. Whatever other tendencies then his acts may be supposed to have, or whatever results they may be supposed to produce, they can have no tendency to establish his authority, and to secure by means of it the highest well-being of his kingdom. On the contrary, the supposed acts must be--the one in the form of favoritism or indulgent tenderness, and

the other in that of resentment or revenge, the dictate of unqualified selfishness, and must therefore decisively disprove his authority.

Nor do natural good and evil employed merely as moral discipline, constitute legal sanctions. It is altogether credible, that a being perfectly benevolent should, prior to assuming the relation of the moral governor of other beings, confer on them much natural good, and inflict some natural evil, for the purpose of securing better results, when they come to act under his moral government, than he could otherwise secure. Such natural good and evil however, cannot constitute legal sanctions. It is also credible, if we suppose a legal economy to be connected, as it may be, with an economy of grace, that natural good and evil should be employed to reform the transgressors of law. Such natural good and evil however, being, merely disciplinary in their design and tendency, cannot constitute legal sanctions. I admit indeed that natural evil inflicted for the purpose of reclaiming an offender, is often called punishment in the popular use of the word. Hence such natural evil is often mistaken for penal evil, or for the penalty of law. Such natural evil, as distinguished from legal penalty, is properly called chastisement. It implies not less than the legal penalty, that the subject is an offender, since otherwise its infliction for the purpose of reformation would be obviously absurd. It differs however essentially, under a perfect moral government, from the legal penalty. Chastisement aims exclusively at the reformation of the subject; legal penalty not at all. Chastisement is inflicted in love legal penalty, in wrath. Chastisement, in its design and tendency, is a blessing to its Subject; legal penalty, an unmitigated curse. Chastisement has a special respect to the individual's benefit; legal penalty respects the good of the public. Hence chastisement cannot, under a perfect moral government, be the penalty of the law, it being a ridiculous a normally to threaten a transgressor of law with the means of his reformation and of his deliverance from the legal penalty; in other words, to threaten a real, and to him the greatest blessing, as a legal penalty.

Nor is the conferring of a legal reward by the moral governor, the payment of a debt, in the sense of that which is due for something received, which is not due. The lawgiver receives nothing in the

obedience of his subjects but what is his due. Obedience is a matter of obligation on their part, and of rightful demand on his; and surely he does not reward them for paying their own debt. By this I do not mean that the reward is not that which is due, at least on account of the relation which conferring it has to the public good, as one means of increasing the public good, and that it may not in this sense be properly said that the reward is reckoned of debt _____. This however cannot imply that the service claimed or rendered is not due to the lawgiver, and that the reward establishes the authority of the lawgiver simply by satisfying the claim of the obedient subject. Indeed, the act of satisfying the claim of the subject, be the ground of it what it may, may be prompted by selfishness as well as by benevolence, and can therefore furnish no proof of benevolence, and none of authority on the part of the lawgiver. Besides, on the supposition opposed, the lawgiver's authority could not be established, until obedience should exist and the reward be conferred. Of course, in the supposed act of obedience there could be no recognition of authority. In short, if the promise and the conferring of a reward for obedience has no relation except to satisfy, a claim of the subject, then it has no relation to the public good. It does not imply the least degree of approbation of obedience as the means of the public good, and instead of being proof of the lawgiver's benevolence, and so of his authority, it is proof to the contrary.

Nor is the endurance of natural evil as a legal penalty the payment of a debt on the part of the transgressor, by which he satisfies the claim of the lawgiver, and thus establishes his authority. For what has the subject received for which he owes suffering as an equivalent? Plainly, he cannot, in this sense, be said to owe suffering as a debt. He has neither done nor failed to do any thing for which suffering on his part can be rendering an equivalent. The language of a benevolent lawgiver is not, "I will be as well pleased and satisfied with disobedience and the endurance of its penalty, as with perfect obedience." Legal penalty is not a thing claimed by the lawgiver and rendered by the transgressor, but a thing threatened and inflicted by the lawgiver, and endured by the transgressor. Considered simply as so much suffering endured, it can have no tendency to manifest the benevolence of the lawgiver. Nor can it have such tendency except it be considered as suffering inflicted by the

act of the lawgiver, and as such, becoming an expression of the emotion which benevolence must feel toward transgression. Voluntary submission to it on the part of the subject, is in no respect necessary to it as a legal penalty. Its infliction is the act of the moral governor, and in no respect the act of the transgressor, by which he may satisfy any demand made on him by the lawgiver, and thus establish his authority.

Nor do natural good and evil become legal sanctions, as being so much motive to secure right and prevent wrong moral action. By this I do not mean, that natural good and evil as the matter of legal sanctions, must not have the influence of motives on the minds of subjects, that they may answer the end of legal sanctions. Nor do mean I mean that the direct influence of natural good and evil as motives, is at all inconsistent with that peculiar influence which we call moral government, so that the two influences may not coexist. But I mean, that the influence of natural good and evil as such, or as so much motive merely, does not constitute them legal sanctions. In such influence merely, there is no influence of authority. The former may exist without the latter. If we suppose the subject to be under the influence of natural good and evil, as so much motive merely, he is not under the influence of authority, and therefore not under the influence of moral government. If we suppose him to conform to the rule of action under the former influence merely, the act would not be done because the moral governor commands it, but done simply to obtain natural good and to avoid natural evil; and of course done without the least regard to the will or character of him who prescribes the rule. Now the object of a perfect moral governor is not merely to secure right moral action, but to secure it in a given way by a peculiar influence--the influence of his authority; to secure it, I do not say exclusively, but really by this influence. It is to bring his subject to act from a respect to his will, as the will of a perfect being. Otherwise the act of conformity to the rule would not be an act of obedience, as involving any recognition of his right to rule. Even supposing the act to be morally right--an act done in view of the true nature and tendency of moral action, still if done from this influence merely, it would no more involve any regard for the character of the lawgiver, as that which gives him the right to rule, than were the subject hired to perform the act by a fellow subject. Natural good and evil then, influencing the subject as merely so much

motive, are not legal sanctions.

Nor do natural good and evil become legal sanctions, on the ground that it is right or just to reward obedience and to punish disobedience, irrespective of the tendency of so doing to produce happiness and to prevent misery. The contrary opinion is maintained by some at least in respect to penalty. It is said that it is right to punish the transgressor of law irrespective of the general good--that it is ill-desert, and not the good of society, which is the ground of his just liability to punishment--that sin or transgression is an evil in itself and deserves punishment for its own sake, and without respect to its tendency to evil. Now in such statements as these, it is obvious that distinctions are made without a difference. It is readily admitted, then, that it is right to punish the transgressor of law; that it is ill-desert, which is the ground of his just liability to punishment, and that sin or transgression is an evil in itself. But it is denied that these things are true, or can be conceived to be true, irrespective of the relation of punishment to some good end, or to the public good. The real and only question in the case then is, would it be right or just to punish the transgressor of law, if no good end could be promoted by his punishment? Or thus, would it be right or just to inflict suffering in a case in which not the least good in kind or degree could result, either to the sufferer or to any other being from its infliction? To say that it would be, is to say that it would be right or just to inflict suffering purely for its own sake. Could a being of perfect benevolence do this? Could any feeling short of unqualified malice prompt it? Would such an act sustain the authority of the moral governor? But it will be said that there is inherent ill-desert in the transgression of a perfect law, and that on this account it is right or just to inflict punishment on the transgressor. But the ill-desert of transgression is either its relation to the law as tending to destroy its authority or the authority of the lawgiver and so to destroy the public good which depends on the authority of law, or it is not. If it is, and if punishment is justly inflicted on this account and as the means of sustaining this authority, then it is inflicted in respect to a good end, even for the public good. If it is not, then plainly the transgression of law sustains no relation to law, on account of which it is right or just to punish it. It leaves the authority of the law or of the lawgiver unimpaired and in full force. It has done, and can do no injury to the law or to the authority

of the lawgiver. There is no evil to be prevented or to be redressed by punishment, no good to be accomplished in respect to the law. Why then punish the transgressor? Is it said that the ill-desert of transgression is not its relation to law as tending to destroy its authority, but its inherent moral turpitude considered simply as wrong moral action? Be it so; but how can this be a good reason for inflicting suffering on the transgressor merely for its own sake, or when no good end can be answered by its infliction? Is it said that it is fit, or proper, or right, or what ought to be done, and that we instinctively feel it to be so? But why is it? Right to inflict suffering purely for the sake of inflicting it! Who are the beings that instinctively feel this to be right, and in what world do they dwell? Of such a species of beings we have no knowledge, and with them if they exist, we utterly disclaim all fraternity. Is it then said that transgression is evil in itself, and that on this account and for its own sake, it deserves punishment? This is only saying in another form the same things. What then is the meaning of the language? There are, generally speaking, two things, and only two, each of which may be properly said to be evil in itself. The one is suffering, including unhappiness and misery, and the other is the direct means of suffering. Each is truly and properly said to be evil in itself, in distinction from being evil as the indirect means of suffering. That suffering, i.e., unhappiness, pain, or misery, is evil in itself will not be denied. So that which is the direct means of suffering or of unhappiness, is properly said to be evil in itself, though it be also the indirect means of it. Thus it is properly said, that ignorance or infamy is evil in itself. But neither of these things is evil in itself in the same sense in which unhappiness or suffering, is. The transgression of a perfect law, sin, wrong moral action, is also evil in itself, not as being itself suffering, but as being in its own nature and true tendency, the direct means of suffering. This is all that can be properly meant by calling transgression or sin evil in itself. Not being identical with suffering or unhappiness, it can be conceived to be evil, only as being in its own nature the direct means of suffering. But how can this fact be a good and sufficient reason for inflicting suffering on the transgressor by a moral governor, when no good can result from the infliction? It would be only to increase evil for evil's sake. And we say again, that nothing short of unqualified malice could inflict suffering in such a case. Or rather, we affirm that the most unqualified malice could not do it. The supposed act is impossible in the nature of things. No being can find a motive to inflict suffering on others any more than on himself, when no good in his view either to himself, or

to them, or to others, is connected with or depends on the act. The supposition involves the absurdity of choosing to act without a motive or a reason--the absurdity of an event without a reason. The supposed act bids defiance to even infernal malice. But it has been said, if the justice of punishment is founded in the utility of punishment, then it will follow, that if the public good would be best promoted by punishing the innocent instead of the transgressor, it would be right and just to punish the innocent, which is revolting to every sentiment of our moral nature. It is readily admitted, that to punish the innocent instead of the guilty, would, as things are in their essential nature and relations, be abhorrent to every true sentiment of right and equity. But here two questions arise; why is it thus, and how would it be, were the nature and relations of things changed in the manner supposed? Why is it thus? Is it not because the truth is clearly seen and strongly felt by every mind, that the authority of law, and with it the public good depend on and require the punishment of the transgressor, and forbid the punishment of the obedient subject? Does not every one know, even the culprit at the bar, as well as the judge on the bench, that to assert, that a due regard to the authority of law and with it to the public good require the punishment of the transgressor, is the set thing as to assert that justice requires his punishment? And now, if we suppose the essential nature of things to be so changed, that the authority of law and the public good as depending on it, would be destroyed, and absolute and universal misery follow, unless the innocent were to be punished, would it not be right to make innocence, now become the true and necessary cause of such fearful results, the ground of punishment? Could a benevolent moral governor voluntarily, become the author of such utter ruin and wretchedness, by suffering the innocent to escape punishment? Plainly on the supposition now made, the nature of things would be so changed, that innocence, obedience to law, would possess the same nature, and sustain the same relations as the ground of punishment, which disobedience now sustains; and if our moral nature approve of the punishment of the latter, it must in the case supposed, approve of the punishment of the former. If it is now right or just to punish the disobedient, it would then be so to punish the obedient--to punish for a thing having the same relative nature, though it should have another name. To deny it, is to make a supposition to be reasoned on, and then to disregard and overlook it in the reasoning. It is like supposing the nature of things to be so changed that two and two should be five, and then to deny that on this supposition two and two would be five, or that twice two

and two would be ten. Those philosophers then, who maintain the justice of punishment, irrespective of its relations to the public good or to any good--and the same thing is true *mutatis mutandis* in respect to the justice of reward, evidently fail to analyze their own necessary ideas or conceptions of things. If the question be put, why is it right to punish transgression, they have no answer to give, but that it is right, or that it is right because it is right, or some equivalent answer equally trivial and irrelevant. If pressed further on the point, they tell us, that the idea of moral rectitude or rightness is a simple idea. An idea incapable of analysis and definition, and that the question is wholly unauthorized, why is an action morally right, or what is that in which its moral rectitude consists. This has already been considered.

Nor do natural good and evil become legal sanctions, considered as the dictate of justice as distinguished from benevolence; or, as annexed to law, apart from their subserviency to public good. This view of the subject, which is not perhaps essentially different from that just considered, instead of representing benevolence as the primary attribute, and justice as one particular form of benevolence, represents them "as distinct and primary characteristics" or attributes of a perfect moral governor. Its advocates are obviously led to adopt it, from an inadequate and false conception of the nature of benevolence, as the comprehensive moral perfection of a perfect ruler. By benevolence, they obviously mean that species of sentimental kindness which seeks the welfare of others as individuals, without regard to the highest well-being of the whole. Such kindness is not the benevolence of a perfect moral governor. It not only does not involve or imply the attribute of justice, but would be palpably inconsistent with it. Benevolence, as the attribute of a perfect moral governor, is the supreme love of the highest happiness of his kingdom, or an elective preference of this object to every other that can come into competition with it as an object of preference. It becomes therefore, from its very nature in relation to the promotion of the highest happiness, a disposition or _purpose to promote it, by every means necessary for its promotion. One of these is, the establishment and support of the authority of a perfect law, or of the lawgiver's authority, by legal sanctions. Benevolence dictates and demands this, and in its very nature necessarily leads to a full and fixed determination or purpose to secure

and employ this means of the general good, or highest well-being of all; and as such a purpose is what we mean, and all that can be meant, by justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor--call it by what name we will--righteousness, holiness, justice--it is a disposition or purpose, prompted by benevolence, to uphold the authority of the law, or of the lawgiver, by legal sanctions as the necessary means of the general good. It is therefore one particular form or modification of benevolence, or a particular disposition or purpose, prompted by benevolence. Indeed, all we all moral attributes in a perfect moral being, except benevolence, are only forms or modifications of benevolence in more particular dispositions or purposes. Thus veracity is a particular disposition or purpose, prompted by his benevolence, to speak truth; pity, or compassions is a particular disposition or purpose prompted by benevolence, to relieve suffering; mercy, as an attribute of a moral ruler, is a particular disposition or purpose, prompted by benevolence, to show favor to the guilty. Justice also, as the attribute of a moral ruler, is a particular disposition or purpose prompted by benevolence, to establish and maintain the authority of law by legal sanctions, which, under a merely legal system, is in all cases indispensable to the general good. It is true that general benevolence dictates and requires other things also, for other things are necessary to the general good. But it demands the support of the authority of the moral governor as one necessary, absolutely indispensable means of this end. Thus viewed as a benevolent disposition to uphold his authority, as the indispensable means of the general good, it constitutes, or rather assumes the particular form, which we call justice, as an attribute of a moral governor. Hence benevolence, as the attribute of a perfect moral governor, never requires any thing which is inconsistent with what justice in a perfect moral governor dictates and demands; for the support of the authority of law is always as truly exacted by benevolence as by justice. Nor does justice ever require any thing inconsistent with benevolence; for the support of the authority of law by the requisite means of its support, is what justice demands, and this is always necessary to the general good, and therefore always dictated and demanded by benevolence. Benevolence, no less than justice requires, under a perfect moral government viewed as a merely legal system, the sacrifice of individual happiness in the case of the transgressor; so that justice in seeking his punishment, never claims what benevolence forbids. What justice demands in such a case, benevolence also demands. So if benevolence dictates and demands an atonement, which Shall fully support the

authority of law in the pardon of the transgressor, it claims nothing which justice as the attribute of a moral governor forbids. The entire claim of justice is met, provided the authority of law be supported in case of transgression, whether this be done by the execution of penalty or by an atonement. There is therefore no antagonism here--no clashing of different attributes in the moral governor--no violence done to benevolence, in answering the inflexible demand of justice; and none to the inflexible demand of justice, by conforming to any conceivable demand of benevolence. Justice, and all the particular moral attributes of a perfect moral governor, may be distinguished not only from each other, but also from his benevolence. But while each particular attribute, so to speak, acts in subservience to benevolence, all act in perfect harmony. Benevolence is the central sun which gives direction, and power, and results, to the whole constellation of the particular moral attributes of a perfect moral governor. If compassion demands relief for the suffering, or if mercy dictates favor to the guilty, so does benevolence. If justice require legal sanctions, as it does under a merely legal system, benevolence also demands them as the necessary means of supporting the authority of the lawgiver, and as such, of promoting the general good.

Such are some of the ways or modes--and I know of no other--in which it has been supposed that natural good and evil can become legal sanctions, instead of that which is now maintained to be the only mode. It is obvious however that they cannot become legal sanctions in any of these modes. If this be so, it is a fair conclusion that they can become legal sanctions in no other than that now maintained; that is, except as manifestations of the moral governor's highest approbation of obedience, and highest disapprobation of disobedience.

I argue the same thing --

In the second place, from what has been already shown respecting the nature of legal sanctions. We have seen that the moral governor can establish his authority only by natural good and evil annexed to his law as sanctions. Whatever else may be necessary for this purpose besides

natural good and evil as legal sanctions, the establishing or sanctioning influence is exclusively from natural good as the reward of obedience, and from natural evil as the penalty of disobedience. But he cannot establish his authority, as we have shown, without manifesting his highest approbation of obedience, and his highest disapprobation of disobedience, and of course cannot establish his authority by natural good and evil as legal sanctions, except as they manifest these feelings. Since then, natural good and evil are necessary as legal sanctions; since they can become such only as manifestations of the moral governor's approval or disapproval, it follows, that they are necessary as legal sanctions, solely because they are requisite for the purpose of such a manifestation.

Or thus: it has been shown that the moral governor cannot establish his authority without manifesting his benevolence; that he cannot do this by natural good and evil as legal sanctions, unless they manifest the necessary feelings of benevolence toward right and wrong moral action; and that these are the highest approbation of the one, and the highest disapprobation of the other. As then the moral governor cannot establish his authority by natural good and evil as legal sanctions, unless they manifest his highest approbation of obedience, and his highest disapprobation of disobedience, it follows, that they are required as legal sanctions, solely because they are necessary for the purpose of such a manifestation.

What has now been said will be more fully confirmed by viewing the subject under some other aspects, and in some other connections. I proceed then to remark --

In the third place, that it is utterly un-supposable and inconceivable, that natural good and evil should become legal sanctions in any other mode, than as expressions or manifestations of the moral governor's highest approbation of obedience, and highest disapprobation of disobedience.

Every one knows, that promising natural good to obedience, in the form of law, and conferring it when obedience is rendered, is the appropriate and most significant possible expression of approbation of obedience; and that the threatening of natural evil to disobedience, in the form of law, and inflicting it when disobedience occurs, is the appropriate and most significant expression of disapprobation of disobedience. The degree of approbation in the one case, and of disapprobation in the other, are justly estimated and measured by the degree of natural good promised or conferred in the one case, and of natural evil threatened or inflicted in the other. Now, when these things are so--when, as we have seen, there is no other conceivable reason that a perfect moral governor should annex natural good and evil to his law as legal sanctions; or rather, when to annex, them for any other conceivable reason or purpose, would disprove his moral perfection and subvert his authority, what good or sufficient reason could he have for annexing natural good and evil to his law as legal sanctions, and to do this for the purpose of establishing his authority, except that they are necessary for this purpose, and because they are the only significant and true, and therefore necessary, expressions of his approval of obedience and disapproval of the opposite.

Again; if natural good and evil can become legal sanctions in any other mode than by expressing the moral governor's highest approbation of obedience, and highest disapprobation of disobedience, it must be either by not manifesting any degree of these feelings, or by manifesting some less degree of them than the highest. Can he then establish his authority by natural good and evil as legal sanctions, without manifesting through them some degree of the feelings specified? This is plainly impossible. For they can be proof of nothing on the part of a moral governor on which his authority depends, unless they manifest on his part some degree of approbation of obedience, and some degree of disapprobation of disobedience. As the appropriate and significant signs of these feelings, they necessarily express them. Even if they are considered as merely so much motive or inducement employed by him to secure obedience and to prevent disobedience, they necessarily imply a preference on his part for some reason or another either a selfish or a benevolent preference--of obedience to disobedience, and of course some kind and degree of

approbation of the one, and of disapprobation of the other. It is true indeed, that if they express these feelings in their selfish form, they become proof against his authority. But it is also true, that if they are not regarded as expressions of these feelings in any form, they can imply no preference of one kind of action to the other, and therefore can prove nothing in respect to the will, can establish nothing in respect to the feelings and character of the moral governor which can have the least bearing on the question of his authority, any more than were they the effects of an impersonal cause or physical agent. If there natural good and evil annexed to law as sanctions, do not manifest some approbation of obedience, and some disapprobation of disobedience on the part of the moral governor, they can prove nothing which can have the remotest connection with establishing his authority--nothing in respect to the purpose for which they are annexed to law. They can sanction nothing they can prove nothing which can give him the right to reign, and therefore cannot be legal sanctions.

Again; it has been already shown that the moral governor can make no decisive expression, and therefore can furnish no decisive proof of his benevolence, except by natural good and evil as legal sanctions; nor by these, except as they express his approbation of obedience, and his disapprobation of disobedience. If therefore he does not make such manifestation, he furnishes no proof of his benevolence, and of course none of his authority. On the contrary, his failure to manifest these feelings by this means, decisively proves that he is not a benevolent but a selfish being, and utterly disproves his authority. Who would concede to another the right to govern--the right to impose his will as an authoritative rule of action, who should refuse to furnish the least proof of his approbation of right, and his disapprobation of wrong moral action, and who should thus furnish decisive proof of that selfishness which, to subserve its purposes, is as ready to befriend and patronize wrong as right moral action--to sacrifice as to promote the highest happiness of his kingdom? Plainly the moral governor cannot establish his authority by natural good and evil as legal sanctions, without manifesting through them some degree of approbation of right, and some degree of disapprobation of wrong moral action.

To recur now to the other side of the alternatives; can the moral governor establish his authority by annexing to his law natural good and evil as sanctions, which manifest a less degree of the feelings specified than the highest? I answer; that to suppose that he can, is to suppose what is absurd and impossible. We have already seen that the moral governor, by annexing that degree of natural good and evil to his law as sanctions which would fully express the highest degree of the feelings specified, would thus manifest the true feelings of benevolence toward right and wrong moral action, and thus decisively establish his authority. But it is obvious, that natural good and evil in this case would become proof of his benevolence solely by expressing his highest approbation of obedience, and his highest disapprobation of disobedience. It is equally plain, that no less degree of natural good and evil would express these feelings. To suppose therefore, that any less degree of natural good and evil as legal sanctions than is necessary should manifest them, is absurd. To suppose that the manifestation of any other feelings either in kind or degree, than the true and necessary feelings of benevolence, should prove benevolence, is equally absurd. The benevolence then of the moral governor, and of course his authority, cannot be proved by any degree of legal sanctions less than that which shall manifest his benevolence in the form of its highest approbation of obedience, and his highest disapprobation of disobedience.

Again; the degree of natural good and evil annexed by the moral governor as sanctions to his law, is the measure and criterion of his approbation of obedience, and disapprobation of disobedience. It is undeniable, that by some given degree of natural good and evil as legal sanctions, he may express the highest degree of these feelings toward right and wrong moral action, and that by the lowest possible degree of natural good and evil as legal sanctions, he would express less approbation of right and disapprobation of wrong moral action, than the highest, and of course less of these feelings toward these objects than the necessary feelings of benevolence. But we may as well suppose that the expression of the least possible degree of these feelings toward right and wrong moral action, is an expression of the necessary feelings of benevolence, as to suppose that any expression of these feelings short of the highest, is an expression of such feelings. But I need not say how

preposterous would be the attempt of a moral governor to prove his benevolence and so to establish his authority, by expressing the least possible degree of approbation of that kind of action, which is the necessary means of the highest happiness of all, and the least possible degree of disapprobation of that kind of action, which is the sure means of the highest misery of all. If then he annexes to his law a less degree of natural good and evil, than that which is requisite to express his highest approbation of obedience, and highest disapprobation of disobedience, he furnishes no proof of the necessary feelings of benevolence, and of course no proof of his authority. On the contrary, he expresses a lower degree of approbation of obedience and of disapprobation of disobedience, than he as a benevolent being, must feel, that is, he expresses that degree of approbation of right, and that degree of disapprobation of wrong moral action, which none but a selfish being can feel. The moral governor cannot establish or prove his authority, or rather he cannot avoid disproving it, without annexing as sanctions to his law, that degree of natural good and of natural evil which expresses his highest approbation of right, and his highest disapprobation of wrong moral action.

I remark yet again, that natural good and evil, which express a less degree of approbation of obedience, and a less degree of disapprobation of disobedience than the highest, cannot become legal sanctions by combining their influence with other influences, to establish the moral governor's authority. The contrary may be supposed. The supposition however is manifestly absurd, since there could be no legal sanctions in the case. Allowing what is indeed impossible, that benevolence of the moral governor may be proved, and that his authority may be fully or partially established by other evidence than that furnished by natural good and evil as legal sanctions, still neither this other evidence nor its sources can be legal sanctions; for nothing can be legal sanctions except natural good and evil. Nor in the case supposed can they be such, since they do not by their own peculiar and exclusive influence establish the moral governor's authority. Nor is this all. The natural good and evil in the case supposed, cannot have the least tendency or influence whatever to establish his authority. Not expressing his highest approbation of obedience and disapprobation of disobedience, they furnish not the

slightest evidence of these feelings, nor of course of the character, which is requisite to authority. They may be evidence of some kind or degree of approbation of right and of disapprobation of wrong moral action, but in no such degree as a perfectly benevolent being must feel. Whatever evidence of authority therefore may be supposed to be furnished by other sources, none can be furnished by the natural good and evil now supposed. On the contrary, these being expressions, are also a proof of a less degree of approbation of right and of disapprobation of wrong moral action than the highest, and are therefore evidence that the moral governor is not a benevolent but a selfish being, and can possess no authority. No other evidence then can establish the authority of the moral governor, except that which is furnished by natural good and evil as legal sanctions manifesting his feelings of benevolence toward right and wrong moral action. No matter what evidence or proof of benevolence he may be supposed to furnish in his other relations, it is altogether neutralized and set aside by his failure to annex as sanctions to his law, that degree of natural good and evil which fully expresses his highest approbation of right and his highest disapprobation of wrong moral action.

If it should here be said--and I know of nothing more plausible on the question at issue (Vide LECTURE VI.)--that a greater amount of right moral action, and with it also of happiness, might be secured by a less degree of natural good and evil as legal sanctions than that now maintained, and that hence benevolence would require that a less degree of such good and evil be annexed to the law as sanctions; I answer, in the first place, that while the natural possibility of the supposed consequence must be admitted in a system including moral beings, the moral governor when assuming this relation in the promulgation of his law, can furnish no proof to his subjects, that a greater amount of right action and of happiness would be secured by the supposed less degree of natural good and evil as legal sanctions. It may be otherwise, and to suppose that it would not be, is to make the supposition, when all the evidence in the case, and the best evidence the nature of the case admits of, is against its truth. It is supposing that a greater amount of right moral action would be secured by a less degree of influence fitted to secure it, than by a greater degree of such influence. The only rational conclusion in the case then is, that a greater amount of right moral action

and of happiness would be secured by the degree of legal sanctions now maintained, than by any less degree. I answer, in, the second place, that there could be no evidence or proof of the benevolence of the moral governor, but there would be decisive proof to the contrary. Nothing can be supposed to exist in the case, of the nature of evidence to this main fact, except the mere declaration of a being whose benevolence and of course his veracity are to be decided by what he does as a moral governor, and this too when all the evidence in the case is against the truth of his declaration. His mere declaration therefore in respect to the greater amount of right moral action and of happiness, cannot be received as evidence of the fact nor of his benevolence. In the third place, in the act of assuming this relation of a moral governor, he comes under its high and peculiar responsibility. He must now in the very act of assuming this relation, and in claiming the homage of his subjects, either show himself recreant to this high responsibility, and thus decisively disprove his right to rule, that is his authority; or he must fulfill the grand function of his office by proving his right to rule, that is, establish his authority by the necessary means of doing so. He cannot establish or prove his authority without furnishing decisive proof of his benevolence; and this he cannot do without annexing that degree of natural good and evil to his law as its sanction, which shall express the feelings of benevolence. On the contrary, without annexing such sanctions to his law, he shows himself selfish and recreant to his high and peculiar responsibilities as a moral governor, disproves his benevolence, and in consequence subverts his authority.

Nor can this decisive proof against his authority be set aside or weakened by any supposable results in the conduct of his subjects. Let us suppose a law without such sanctions as I advocate, and this law or rule of action to be followed with perfect conformity on the part of those to whom it is given, except in one single instance. In this case there could be no proof that a law with such sanctions as I advocate in its stead, would not be followed by perfect conformity without even one exception. Of course, there could be no proof that the lawgiver, in giving the law without such sanctions, acts benevolently. On the contrary, the proof as above stated, that he does not act benevolently, remains unimpaired and decisive. He makes no strong expression of the feelings of a benevolent

being toward right and wrong moral action, which he must do, or disprove his benevolence and therefore his authority. Let us now suppose the same law to be given, and to be followed with perfect conformity on the part of subjects, without even a solitary exception. This would furnish no proof that the supposed law would be followed by the supposed result, even for an hour or a moment beyond the time in which it actually exists, nor that a law with the sanctions which I advocate, would not be followed with the supposed perfect obedience forever. There can of course be no proof that the lawgiver, in the case supposed, has annexed those sanctions to his law which benevolence requires him to do. Nor is this all. There can be no proof that he would annex such sanctions to his law as I advocate, did he know that the greatest good required it. By annexing therefore the supposed limited sanctions to his law, he not only does not prove his benevolence, but he never can prove it. He, can furnish no evidence that he has any other feelings toward right and wrong moral action than those of a selfish being. The proof then of his benevolence, depends not on any present amount of right moral action on the part of subjects, under a law without the sanctions which I advocate; nor on any conjectures, or supposed possibility respecting what would be the amount of such action under such a law. It depends not on what he declares respecting the result on right moral action, but on what he does in the time, and in the act of assuming the relation of one having a right to govern. The law must come forth from the throne, bearing the testimonial of such authority in its nature and form. It must be in itself, i. e. in its sanctions, a decisive testimonial of the feelings and the character of the lawgiver. Instead of waiting for the conduct of subjects to create its authority by their conformity to its demands, or leaving them to conjecture its authority, which implies that it has no authority, it must bear unqualified and decisive proof of this in its very promulgation. As an expression of the feelings of perfect benevolence toward right and wrong moral action by the moral governor, that is, of his highest approbation of the one, and of his highest disapprobation of the other, its very announcement must invest it with authority. It must thus show what the moral governor is in his character, by showing what his feelings are toward right and wrong moral action, and as depending on these, toward the weal and woe of his kingdom. Why? Because, in this way, and in this way only, can the question of his authority be settled, when it should and must be, viz., when he gives the law. Because, as we have seen, in this way the best evidence which the nature of the case admits of would be furnished,

because such evidence is imperiously demanded--because if he has the character which invests him with authority, it will be furnished, and because therefore if it is not furnished, it is decisive proof that he does not possess the character. Make what other supposition you will concerning his declarations or his doings, it is nothing better, and can be regarded by his subjects as nothing better than the barefaced hypocrisy of saying to a sufferer, 'Be warmed, be filled, and giving nothing.' He can easily settle the question of his character and his authority--he can at once place it beyond all reasonable doubt; he can thus bring that highest, best influence on the minds of his subjects, an influence as desirable as the highest happiness, and the prevention of the highest misery of his kingdom. If he expects confidence in his character or homage to his authority, why does he not show that he has the feelings toward the conduct of his subjects and the welfare of his kingdom, which alone can entitle him to their confidence, and their homage, and enthrone him in rightful dominion. Plainly if he does not do it--if he does not annex those sanctions to his law which express the feelings of benevolence toward right and wrong moral action, feelings which as a benevolent being he must not only have but must express, then he authorizes the belief that he is selfish and not benevolent, and in consequence disproves his authority. And it will not be pretended, that presenting himself to his kingdom in character nothing better than an infinite fiend, that he uses that degree of influence to secure right moral action, which will secure the greatest amount of such action which can be secured, or that he can secure the least degree of it, by that influence which is essential to secure to the greatest amount of it, the influence of authority. Natural good and evil then, which as legal sanctions express the moral governor's highest approbation of right, and highest disapprobation of wrong moral action, are necessary to prove his benevolence, and so to establish his authority.

In the third place, I remark, that the view now given of the nature of legal sanctions, is substantially that which all men entertain of the supreme law of the state, so far as they regard its authority. I say, so far as they regard its authority, meaning so far as they regard the law of the state as established and administered by disinterested love of country. Such indeed is the evidence of selfishness, even on the part of civil rulers, as

distinguished from true patriotism, that in our utmost respect for civil government, we regard it as having a quasi authority rather than a real authority, and find ourselves under the necessity of imagining the latter, and acting as if we believed it, rather than actually believing it. Whether this be an imaginary or real regard for the authority of the law, I include it under the language which I use, and contemplate it as real. By that law of the state, which I call supreme, I mean that which is essential to the government of the state as a moral government, and obedience to which is the test of loyalty. The reward of obedience to this law, in language which admits of some qualification in extreme cases, but needs none for our present purpose, is the protection of life, liberty and property. The penalty of this law is death.

If now we contemplate the nature of this reward, and the condition on which it is conferred, we cannot fail to see its peculiar characteristic as a legal sanction. In its nature, it is obviously the highest good which a civil government can confer as a common blessing on its obedient subjects. It is conferred solely on condition of the subject's obedience to the supreme law of the state. It is therefore a plain and unequivocal expressions direct and decisive proof of the moral governor's highest approbation of obedience to this law. No subject can fail to regard it in this light, who reflects at all on its design; nor can he regard it in this light, without regarding it as a decisive manifestation of that character of the lawgiver, which alone becomes him as the guardian of a nation's welfare, and which alone gives him a right to rule. The subject doubtless will regard the reward as so much natural good, and as such, a motive to conform to the demand of the law. But as an obedient subject, as under and submitting to authority, he must regard the reward as something more than simply so much natural good as a motive. He must regard it as that which by manifesting the lawgiver's design to secure the highest welfare of the state, gives majesty to his law, and inspires reverence for his authority. Otherwise all we call the majesty of law or the authority of civil government, is reduced to the contemptible conceit of a mere contract or stipulation of so much hire for a certain amount of service. To call such a contract government or law, or to speak of its authority, is to talk of what has no existence. Viewed as a legal sanction then, reward is something more than so much natural good as a motive to fulfill the claim of law. It

manifests the moral governor's highest approbation of that on the part of the subject which ought to be most highly approved, viz., his obedience, and carries to every mind the conviction of that character of the governor which gives him a right to rule, and thus establishes his authority.

The same thing is true in respect to the penalty of the civil law, viz., it is designed to establish the authority of the governor. This, as I maintain, it does, and is designed to do, as a direct and decisive expression and proof of his highest disapprobation of disobedience to the supreme law of the state. The penalty of this law, as I have said, is death. Here it were highly desirable, did our limits allow, to distinguish this penalty of the supreme law of the state from those punishments or penalties as they are often called, which are annexed to various particular and subsidiary legislative enactments, as merely so much good or evil in the form of motive to prevent transgression. This distinction I have attempted to trace in an appendix to this lecture. I will only say here, that it is evident that this class of punishments are not legal sanctions; inasmuch as the subject who incurs them, is virtually treated as an obedient subject, that is, he is virtually rewarded as such by being protected, with some qualification greater or less, in his life, liberty and property. The offenses for which this class of punishments is inflicted, do not, in the eye of the law, involve a principle of hostility to the state. But the penalty of death the penalty of the supreme law of the state, is inflicted only for such crimes as treason or murder--crimes, which in the eye of the law, do involve a spirit of war on the happiness and existence of the state; and which therefore require the expression of the highest disapprobation of him who is the guardian of the state. If now we consider this penalty in its adaptation and fitness to this end, we shall see that there can be no ground to doubt that it is designed to answer this end. And here it may be safely assumed that there can be no hesitation on this point, except this one, that death without torture is not, in the strictest accuracy of speech, the highest degree of natural evil which the governor can inflict for disobedience. Hence it may perhaps be inferred by some, that it is not designed as a direct and decisive expression of his highest disapprobation of disobedience; but only as so much natural evil to deter from disobedience in the form of motive.

Admitting then, that in the strictest use of language (and who makes such a use of it in common life?) death without torture, is not the highest degree of natural evil which is possible in the case, there are three suppositions to be made and considered. One is, that on this account death is not according to the true mode of judging, viewed either by the governor or his subjects as an expression and proof of his disapprobation, or that it is not designed to be such by the governor, nor to be so regarded by his subjects. From this supposition, it follows that there is nothing in civil government, either as viewed by the governor or his subjects, which answers to the idea of authority. There is no evidence from the penalty, and therefore none from any source, that he has the least degree of disapprobation of obedience, and therefore no evidence that he has a right to rule. On the contrary, there is decisive proof that he has not this right. Civil government of course is not in the lowest sense a moral government. In its highest perfection, it involves not an iota of that influence which is called authority. Another supposition is, that the governor and his subjects according to the true mode of judging--and it is difficult to see how it can be otherwise--regard to penalty of death as expressing some, degree of disapprobation of disobedience to the supreme law of the state, but not the highest degree. On this supposition there can be no ground of confidence in his character as a civil ruler; and of course no recognition of his authority. As the head of an empire, that he may secure the confidence of his subjects, and command their submission to his authority as the rightful guardian of all, he is under a necessity of annexing a penal sanction of peculiar severity to the supreme law of the state. He is obliged to show that he will sacrifice the life of any subject, who like the traitor or the murderer, shall war on the welfare and existence of the state, rather than sacrifice the state itself. To test the truth of this remark, let it be supposed that he refuses to execute the traitor or the murderer, because he is his friend, or his favorite, or even his son; and would not an enlightened and just public sentiment frown him into infamy and contempt, as unworthy of his place and as having no right to rule? And why? Is it that as the only guardian of the state, he does not express some degree of disapprobation of a deed so hostile to the state which is less than the highest degree? Or is it, that in their estimation he does not express the highest disapprobation of the crime by the infliction of death as the requisite penalty? Plainly the latter, for without this view of the penal sanction, there could be no proof that the moral governor regarded the welfare of the state as the supreme

good; that he would not sacrifice it to any inferior object or end. Whether the penalty of death can be justly regarded as the expression and proof of his highest disapprobation or not, it is undeniable that it must be so regarded, or there can be no ground of confidence in his character as the ruler and protector of the state, and of course no recognition of his authority. A third supposition then is not merely that it is, so regarded, but that it is justly so regarded; in other words, that according to the true mode of judging in the case, both the governor and his subjects regard the penalty of death as a direct and decisive expression and proof of his highest disapprobation of disobedience to the supreme law of the state, and as such a legal sanction. But here the question arises, how can death without torture be justly regarded as such an expression? I answer, that in the common conceptions of all men, death is the supreme evil to man. It is, as it were, constantly in common speech, and of course in the common conceptions, of the human mind, distinguished as the greatest of evils to man, considered as a being of earth and time. As such it is signalized in all human thought, familiarized as the evil most to be dreaded, and even personified as the king of terrors. The idea of it, is of so great an evil--it so absorbs thought and feeling by its own magnitude, that the ordinary suffering which is an attendant circumstance, is unthought of as enhancing it. If we dread its approach, if we adopt means to escape it ourselves or to prevent it in others, it is death as death that we think of, and not the sufferings it may bring with it. Or if we suppose a degree of suffering to be connected with it, it would be apt to attract and engross thought and feeling, and so to divert the dread of the greater evil to the less; and it is easier, as every one knows, to harden the mind against bodily suffering than against death, when the mind conceives the latter as an evil in its true magnitude. Nor can it be reasonably doubted, that the threatening of death--of death simply--death as the supreme evil in the habitual thought and feeling of the human mind, is fitted to make a stronger impression than the threatening of any other evil. Different effects might to some extent be produced on different minds by the supposed difference of penalty. But I now speak of the most general effect, and the thought and the fear of death are ever present to every mind in their practical and controlling power. Now it is of this universal habitual thought and fear of death, that the moral governor in presenting the penalty of his law avails himself. He conforms to this universal and familiar conception of the human mind; and when he would impress most effectually every subject with his highest disapprobation of disobedience

to his supreme law, he makes that which in their constant and familiar conceptions is signalized as the supreme evil--the greatest of all evils--the expression and the proof of his disapprobation. What so natural, what so fitted to his design? They know how the language ought to be understood. He knows how it will be understood. He knows their conceptions of the evil, and is sure of the judgment which they will form of the degree of his disapprobation of disobedience, when thus measured by death as the penalty of his law. He thus shows himself the benevolent protector of the welfare of the state, by showing himself in their just estimation the mortal enemy of rebellion against it. In the most natural, obvious and impressive manner, even in the only possible way, he manifests the highest disapprobation of disobedience to his supreme law; and so also the feelings and the character on which his authority depends.

Thus I have attempted to show, that the view now maintained of the nature of legal sanctions in a perfect moral government, is substantially that which mankind generally entertain of the sanctions of the supreme law of the state. If indeed we find, in the wisest and best administration of human government, some occasional departures from, or even violations of the principles contended for, still we also find the most distinct recognition of the principles themselves. Every such departure or violation is so obviously the result of the comparative inferiority of the interests to be protected, and the necessary imperfection of a human administration, not to say of its corruption, as clearly to show, that they cannot mar the moral administration of a Being infinitely perfect. Here no departure from the principles of eternal truth and righteousness can arise from weakness or error, from indifference or aversion to the end to be accomplished. The magnitude of the interests concerned, the value of the law as the indispensable means of securing these interests, the ill-desert of transgression as the destruction of this law, the relation and the authority of the lawgiver, are to be estimated, not by the standard of earth and time, but by that of eternity. And if what has now been said in respect to the sanctions of the law of the state be true, what can truth, and wisdom, and goodness demand in the government of a kingdom, where every act of every subject is virtually the perfect and endless happiness or misery of all, but a full and unqualified manifestation of the benevolence of Him that sitteth on the throne, in his highest approbation of right and disapprobation of wrong moral action'? What other influence

can command respect and reverence, or be fitted to secure confidential and cheerful submission to his will, except that which emanates from the sanctions of his law, revealing that character which alone becomes the friend and guardian of universal happiness an influence from the manifestation of himself, clothing him with majesty as with a garment?

I shall conclude this lecture with three remarks:

1. Christianity is not a selfish system of religion. Infidels have often said, that Christianity, inasmuch as it aims to influence men by rewards and punishments, is a selfish, mean, and mercenary system. And I am sorry to say, that many of the friends and advocates of Christianity have furnished too much occasion for this reproach. It has often been said in the pulpit, that man cannot act under the influence of the divine threatening without acting in a selfish manner; and yet oftener, how this can be otherwise has been deemed an unsolvable problem. The question more fully stated, is this: how can the promised good and the threatened evil involved in these sanctions be presented to the mind of man, without directly appealing to his selfishness; or, how can man act in view of these motives without acting in a selfish manner?

I answer, that according to the view now given of legal sanctions as involving natural good and evil, they appeal not to human selfishness at all, but only to self-love, or to the constitutional susceptibility of the mind to happiness and misery. They do not appeal to selfishness, because that would be to offer a less good than the greatest. But these sanctions proffer the highest good of which man is capable--the happiness of being good and doing good. And to choose this is to be disinterestedly benevolent. It is voluntarily renouncing every good which can come into competition with the public weal, and therefore truly virtuous. And further: the direct influence of these sanctions on the mind, as natural good and evil, wholly terminates in awakening constitutional desires to secure the one and avoid the other. Such desires are not voluntary states of the mind, not acts of the will, and therefore not selfishness, which is an act of will. They are simply constitutional feelings, inseparable from the nature

of man as a sentient being, without which man could become neither benevolent nor selfish, but must be as insensible as a stone or a clod. By these susceptibilities, with their resulting states of desire, he is qualified, in one respect, to become either benevolent or selfish, and can therefore become selfish only by his own fault, only by the perversion of the influence, which is designed to secure the opposite result, benevolence. Nor is this all. For, while the reward and the penalty are designed and fitted to awaken strong constitutional emotion, the design by no means terminates in this. They are designed to be subservient to another and a higher purpose--to show God to the mind, and to do it in the most impressive manner conceivable; to rouse thought and sensibility and emotion to behold God in his supreme approbation of obedience and supreme disapprobation of disobedience; to see and know this fact as one in which the mind has a direct personal concern. The design is to show, in such a manner that the mind shall not fail to see God in the glory of his holiness--with the full strength of his infinite will fixed on securing right and preventing wrong moral action. Such is the object presented through the medium of these sanctions. And is it selfishness, for man thus seeing clearly and exactly what God is, to love him? Is there any influence more directly sanctifying in its tendency, more fitted to make holy than that which is furnished by this vision of the perfect God? And is it mean or mercenary for man to yield himself to do the will of infinite wisdom and goodness, and thus in heart, in will and character, to become like God himself?

2. In the view which has now been given of legal sanctions, we may see what it is to make light of the divine threatenings. I here speak hypothetically. If God is administering a perfect moral government over men, then in view of the sanctions of such a government, what is it to make light of them? What are they? Manifestations of God, peculiarly bright, glorious, and awful. They are manifestations of God in that character, under that high relation to man, which is more desirable, more exalted, more worthy of Himself, and more useful to man, than any the human mind can conceive. If a perfect God is not also the perfect moral governor of his moral creation, what is he? I am not now saying that he is. But if he is not, I ask you what he is? Have you decided, can you decide surely and beyond all doubt, what that relation is which God

sustains to moral beings if not that of their moral governor? Do not, then, make light of what are and what must be if he is their moral governor--the sanctions of his law. Prove Christianity to be false if you can. But do you know, can you prove, that God is not administering a perfect moral government over his moral creation? This is at least a possible truth. There may be such a God, such a government, such sanctions. And it is any thing but philosophy, reason, or magnanimity to trifle with such possible reality as this. Say if you must, that you do not believe that proof is wanting; but do not ridicule, do not despise and make light of it, lest haply you make light of God in the brightest splendors of his glory.

3. Those who deny the view now given of the sanctions of a perfect moral government cannot prove the benevolence of God. Deists, universalists, all those who deny either the fact or the nature of God's perfect moral government, profess to believe that God is perfectly benevolent. This belief, to man in his weakness and consequent dependence on his Maker, it would seem must be quite welcome, not to say natural. It is the only source of light in this dark world; the only refuge from terror. What an amount of misery must result from the thought of a tyrant in the heavens, and of the cruelties to which his creation must be exposed. Ignorant as men may be of goodness, and little as they may esteem or desire it for themselves, all know how to appreciate it when compared with the opposite character, as that of the Being who holds in his hands their destiny. Hence, even with those who entertain inadequate and false views of its nature and its necessary doings, it is a fond and favorite belief that God is good.

But it is a momentous question, can they, on their principles, show any ground for this belief; can they prove that God is good? I answer, not unless they can show that he is administering a perfect moral government over men. If this can be proved, if it can be seen from the light of nature that he is administering a perfect moral government over men involving on his part the highest approbation of right and the highest disapprobation of wrong moral action; if it can be shown that he has so begun the administration of his moral government in this world, that he can, and that he furnishes sufficient evidence that he will finish it in

another; that he is carrying forward such a system in respect to each individual of our race as rapidly as its perfection demands, and this with a singleness of purpose to complete what he has begun, and with a benignity of execution which foretells results worthy of infinite goodness, especially if it can be proved that he is administering such a government under an economy of grace, then indeed it may not be difficult to prove his perfect benevolence. Then we may be able to show that he has adopted the best conceivable system, that moral evil is incidental in respect to divine prevention to this best system; that natural evil is the necessary means of the greatest good; and that the system itself, with its issues here and hereafter, is as decisive a proof of the goodness of its author, as had no evil but the perfect and universal happiness of his creation been the actual result. But if on the other hand, it cannot be shown that God is administering a perfect moral government, involving the manifestation of his highest approbation of right, and his highest disapprobation of wrong moral action, then his benevolence or moral perfection cannot be proved. Yet more is true. If the proof of benevolence is wanting in respect to a being who has been acting for thousands of years in the view of his intelligent and dependent creatures, the want of such evidence is itself proof of the opposite character.

If you say, that aside from the fact that God is administering a perfect moral government over men, there is abundant proof of his benevolence, I ask, what is it and what are your promises? You must know or prove something to be true of God, that you may frame an argument. If God then is not a perfect moral governor of men, what is lie? What relation or relations does he sustain toward his dependent creatures, and what are his designs and purposes concerning them? If you cannot decide these questions, then you know and can decide nothing to your purpose. On the question of his moral character you have no data, no premises; and you must either believe nothing respecting it, or believe that he is a selfish or malignant being, or that he is good without evidence, and merely because you wish to believe it.

What then is the proof that God is benevolent, on the supposition that he is not a perfect moral governor? Is it said, that as a being of infinite

natural perfection, he must be also a being of infinite benevolence? I answer, not so, not of necessity, for he is a free moral agent; nor yet of certainty, for other moral beings are wholly selfish, and yet are not so through the imperfection of their natural powers. I admit indeed, that the natural perfections of God furnish a presumption of his moral perfection, even sufficient proof of it, if it can be shown to be uncounteracted by opposing evidence. But it is a kind of evidence which in its nature admits of opposing evidence, and may be wholly neutralized and set aside by his acts and his doings, by his treatment of his creatures. His natural perfections then, in view of the existing evil under his government, furnish no proof, nothing like proof, of his benevolence, until the existence of evil be accounted for consistently with his benevolence. If a father, in all that he has done for his dependent offspring from birth to manhood, has furnished no proof of affection and kindness toward them by his conduct, to what purpose should we appeal to his intellectual and physical superiority, or even to the fact that he is their father? The evidence from his doings, from the utter want of benevolent action, would be decisive against his benevolence. Do you then appeal to the doings of God, and claim that he proves himself to be good by imparting more happiness than misery to his creatures, and thus rendering their existence far preferable to non-existence? This fact, though it may be necessary to the proof, is not itself proof of the goodness of the Creator. Beings who are not benevolent but are wholly selfish, often produce more happiness than misery. Why then does not an omnipotent Creator impart perfect and unmingled happiness to his sentient creation; why, under his government, is there misery at all? Do you say, that nothing is contrived to produce misery, that every design and adaptation is to produce good, that "teeth are made to eat and not to ache." This is not true in such a respect as your argument requires. Teeth are made to ache. He who made them, knew that they would ache, and for some reason or other intended that they should ache. And the question is, why not make teeth which would not ache? Is there any pretense that God has produced all the natural good he can, so far as mere power is concerned? Do you then say, that the fact that creatures are not perfectly happy, is not owing to the want of power in God, but to some limitation in the nature of things; that the system by which alone the greatest good possible to the Creator can be produced involves, in respect to his prevention, evil in the nature of things? What evil? You cannot say all the natural evil which exists. Do you then say moral evil, and as a necessary and useful consequence,

natural evil? Be it so. But then, what is that system which thus necessarily in the nature of things involves moral evil? Plainly a moral system, a moral government; and if it be proof of a perfect God, then it must be a perfect moral government. But now you are on our ground. You are reasoning from the fact that God is administering a perfect moral government over men. And thus you are compelled to reason, if you would find the shadow of proof that God is benevolent, or rather if you would set aside the most decisive proof that he is not benevolent. And now if you mean to reason in proof of the divine benevolence on this ground, then do not forget it. God, you believe, is administering a perfect moral government over men. If you do not, and say that there is some other mode of proving his benevolence than on the ground that he is administering a perfect moral government over men, then tell us what it is. This is one of the great points in the argument for God's benevolence. It is not to be passed over lightly, to be conceded for the moment, to be used for the purpose of establishing a conclusion and then forgotten as the most momentous relation of God to his moral creation. If God is not the perfect moral governor of men, we want to know what he is, what are his relations, designs, and doings toward the children of men; we want to know what his character is; we want to know whether there is nothing on the throne of the universe but omnipotent selfishness or infinite malignity; we want to know, in a word, what the God of the infidel is.

He is not to have the benefit to his argument and his system of the belief in a benevolent God, unless he can prove that in truth there is such a God. This he cannot do without admitting the fact--which, as I maintain, is fatal to his infidelity--the truth that God is administering a perfect moral government over men. He is shut up to this alternative. He must admit either that God feels the highest approbation of right and the highest disapprobation of wrong moral action, or that he does not; that God reigns over us in the glory of a perfect moral dominion, or that the Being who holds all destiny in his hands is a being of unqualified selfishness, or even of infinite malignity. From this dilemma there is no escape.

And now I request those infidels, universalists--all who deny that God feels the highest approbation of right and highest disapprobation of

wrong moral action, and as a perfect moral governor will express these feelings--to look carefully at this point. You believe in the perfect benevolence of God. But is your faith rational according to your own principles; has it the least foundation or warrant unless God is the perfect moral governor? You believe in God's perfect benevolence. Why? Have you examined the foundations of your faith? Have you seen, that if you believe in God's benevolence, you must believe in God's perfect moral government over yourself and all men? Have you looked at the monstrous incongruity in a God perfectly benevolent, and yet not feeling the highest approbation of right, and the highest disapprobation of wrong moral action? Or rather, for you will allow me to ask the question, is not this aspect of God unwelcome and repulsive, and excluded from your faith for the sake of what seems to you the more attractive and lovely view of a being who is good without being just, and virtually indifferent to the best thing as the means of happiness, and to the worst thing as the means of misery, right and wrong moral action? If so, see where you stand. As a rational being you are bound to believe in an infinite God who is virtually indifferent to that action in his creatures, which will secure their highest happiness or misery--indifferent to the weal and woe, the life and death of his own creation--a being who has no rectitude of principle, and who, for aught that appears, will sacrifice to self-will, to favoritism, to selfishness in some form, every interest of every creature whose character can excite no love, awaken no hope, inspire no confidence--whose heart is unmoved by pity, untouched by woe--a being, the bare thought of whom is enough to fill the soul with consternation and dismay. If there is any thing in reason, such is--such must be the God of the infidel. And if the aspect of the God of Christianity is unwelcome and repulsive, what is that of the God of infidelity? The character of the former to a wise and good man (I know I speak with the approbation of every man's conscience) is ground only for hosannas of rapture--that of the latter would make all things tremble but the dark throne on which he himself sitteth.

LECTURE VIII: That the legal sanctions of a perfect moral government include the highest degree of natural good possible in each case of obedience, and the highest degree of natural evil possible in each case of disobedience.

V. A perfect Moral Government Involves the exercise of authority through the medium of law, The nature of the law further unfolded. -- Seventhly. The Law of a perfect Moral Government Involves the requisite sanctions of the Moral Governor's authority. -- 6th. Legal sanctions include the highest possible degree of natural good, &c., and the highest possible degree of evil. OBJECTIONS. -- Punishment ought to terminate with sin; if all should disobey, all ought not to be punished; incredible and impossible that God should adopt a moral system with such liabilities. Conclusion.

I Now proceed to show as I proposed --

6th. That the legal sanctions of a perfect moral government include the highest degree of natural good possible in each case of obedience, and the highest degree of natural evil possible in each case of disobedience.

The doctrine has often been maintained, that natural good and evil in their highest degree, annexed to the best law as its reward and penalty, become legal sanctions by operating simply as motives (or inducements) to secure the greatest amount of obedience. We have seen however, if that natural good and evil employed merely in the way of motives, cannot become legal sanctions. It is doubtless true that the natural good and evil employed as legal sanctions, have beside their sanctioning influence and as necessary to it, another, even the influence of motives. This with the sanctioning influence, or with that which establishes the authority of the moral governor, may be necessary to secure the greatest amount of obedience. If we could suppose a system designed to secure the greatest amount of right moral action by the mere influence of natural good and evil as motives, and to the exclusion of the peculiar influence of moral government--the influence of authority--then we could not say, that the highest possible degrees of natural good and evil would not be necessary to the end proposed. Be this however as it may, the present argument for the highest degrees of natural good and evil is not placed on this basis. It rests solely on the ground that such degrees of natural

good and evil are necessary for another purpose, that of sanctioning or establishing the authority of the moral governor.

This argument, in view of what has been already said, may be thus briefly presented. Natural good and evil are necessary as legal sanctions to the law of a perfect moral government; they are necessary as legal sanctions, for in their relation they establish and sustain the authority of the moral governor; they are so as being the necessary manifestations of his benevolence in the particular forms of his highest approbation of obedience and disapprobation of disobedience. This degree of approval and disapproval can be manifested only by the highest possible degree of natural good as the reward of obedience and of natural evil as the penalty of disobedience. It follows therefore, that the highest possible degree of natural good as a legal reward, and of natural evil as a legal penalty are necessary to establish the authority of the moral governor.

This argument contains two premises in addition to others already considered, which, obvious as they are, may need a more particular consideration.

I remark then --

In the first place, that the legal reward must, for the purpose specified, consist of the highest possible degree of happiness to the obedient subject.

I now speak of that degree of reward which pertains to a perfect system of moral government--a system in which the highest happiness of each individual is consistent with that of the whole. Some indeed maintain the impossibility of such a system, affirming that the sin and misery of a part are the necessary means of the greatest good of the whole. To this I here briefly reply, that the assumption of a system in which the highest good of each shall be consistent with that of the whole as an impossibility, is

wholly gratuitous and unauthorized, since the supposition of such a system cannot be shown to involve any contradiction or absurdity. And further, if such a system of moral government is impossible, then a perfect system of moral government is impossible; indeed, any thing which can be called a moral government is impossible; for sin being according to the supposition, the necessary means of the greatest. good, there can be no sincerity, truth, or benevolence, and of course no authority in a lawgiver who should forbid it. And lastly, the supposed perfect system is possible, nothing being more absolutely certain, than that every moral agent and therefore every subject of a moral government can be morally perfect, and that the moral perfection of each and of all in its true tendency, would secure the perfect happiness of each and of all. If then in such a system the moral governor does not secure the highest happiness of the obedient subject which he can secure, he does not choose to make the subject thus happy; and as the highest happiness of each obedient subject is consistent with and necessary to the highest happiness of the whole, he neither chooses the highest happiness of the individual, nor of the whole. He is therefore not benevolent, and has no right to give law to a moral kingdom. The same thing on the present supposition may be shown in other forms. Not choosing to make the obedient subject happy in the highest possible degree, the moral governor does not express the highest approbation of obedience, and therefore does not feel it. He therefore proves that he is not benevolent, and of course subverts his authority or right to command. Or thus, according to what has been already shown, the decisive expression of the moral governor's highest approbation of obedience, is indispensable as a proof of such approbation, while not to make such an expression gives equal evidence of the want of such approbation--proof of the want of benevolence--of the opposite principle, and of course of the want of all authority or right to rule. But the only conceivable mode of proving his highest approbation of obedience, is by conferring on the obedient subject on account of his obedience the highest possible degree of happiness. Otherwise he can furnish no proof that he does not feel, and would not express higher approbation of disobedience than of obedience. If then he does not confer on the obedient subject the highest possible degree of happiness as a legal reward, he does not regard obedience as he ought, or as a perfect being must regard it. He shows himself to be destitute of benevolence, and therefore without authority.

Again; if the moral governor does not confer the highest possible happiness on the obedient as a reward, there can be no proof that he would do it, were it necessary to prevent the universal disobedience, and with it the universal and perfect misery of his kingdom. Nor is the supposition of such a necessity unauthorized. There can be no proof that it does not exist. The declaration of the moral governor to the contrary cannot be received as evidence; for there is no proof of his benevolence, and of course none of his veracity. Such a reward may be necessary to prevent such a fearful issue. But since the moral governor refuses according to the present supposition, to annex such a reward to his law, when as we have seen it is dictated by benevolence and demanded by the highest happiness of his kingdom, it follows, that there can be no proof that he would confer such a reward were it necessary to prevent the universal disobedience, and with it the universal and perfect misery of his kingdom. As he does not confer the reward which is demanded by, benevolence in the one case, there can be no reason to conclude that he would in the other. What confidence can be reposed in such a being--what authority can he possess?--He, a being of whose benevolence there is not the slightest evidence--of whose selfishness the proof is decisive, and who may--as all are bound to believe, consent to and actually prefer the universal and perfect wretchedness of his kingdom, rather than confer the highest happiness which he can confer on perfectly obedient subjects.

Should it here be said, that the highest possible degree of happiness as a legal reward, is inconsistent with different degrees of reward according to the merit of different subjects, I answer, that the capacity of happiness in different subjects would differ according to their character. If we suppose various degrees of merit in subjects who are perfectly obedient, we must suppose different degrees of capacity for happiness. Should each therefore receive as a reward the highest possible amount of happiness, that is, the highest of which he is capable, degrees of reward would exist, differing according to the degrees of merit.

In respect to the duration of reward, I remark, that from the very nature of

law, it follows, that reward must continue while obedience continues, and cease when obedience ceases. That it must do so, is obvious from what has been already shown. To suppose reward to be withheld from a subject who continues obedient, is to suppose no approbation, but disapprobation of obedience on the part of the moral governor, and of course the want of authority. That the reward must cease when obedience ceases--every expression of approbation of the conduct of the subject on the part of the governor is equally obvious. The demand of the law is, that the subject render ceaseless obedience, and the subject is bound to render it. When therefore he ceases to obey, he ceases to satisfy the claim of law--ceases to fulfill his obligation--ceases to be an obedient subject. All ground of approbation by the moral governor ceases, and it is impossible that he should regard and treat the subject as obedient, without regarding and treating him as he is not; without regarding the non-fulfillment of the claim of law, as obedience to it. The governor can therefore never confer a reward on the disobedient subject, without approving of his failure to satisfy the claim of law. If we suppose the disobedient subject to reform, this cannot so change his relation to law as to cause him to stand right in law, or to become the fit object of favor and reward from the moral governor. He has not satisfied the claim of law, but violated it. He never can satisfy it. The lawgiver therefore must cease to express all approbation of the subject by ceasing forever to reward, or he must reward in view of his unsatisfied claim for obedience; that is, he must pass by, overlook, and virtually approve and reward transgression, and thus subvert his authority.

We may view this topic in another light. The disobedient subject destroys all law and all authority. His act in its true nature and tendency destroys all good and produces all evil. His ill-desert is not so diminished by subsequent reformation, as not to require that degree of penalty which is necessary to express the moral governor's highest disapprobation of such an act. The deed has been done which creates the necessity for such an infliction of evil. Without it, no adequate expression can be made of the moral governor's feelings toward the act, nor of his benevolence. But the principle now stated will be still more obvious, when we consider the degree of penal evil which is necessary to establish and sustain the moral governor's authority.

I remark, then --

In the second place, that the legal penalty must consist of the highest possible degree of misery to the disobedient subject.

Were the moral governor to inflict a less degree of suffering as a legal penalty than the highest possible in the case, nothing would or could appear to show that he would not inflict greater suffering for something else, even for some act of obedience, than he inflicts for disobedience. Why else, when every object and end for expressing disapprobation at all, imperiously demands the expression of the highest disapprobation, when as we have seen, nothing can justify him in inflicting natural evil as a penalty, except the necessity of so doing to establish his authority by showing his highest disapprobation of disobedience, or that there is nothing which he so much abhors as this supreme evil, why does he not show it? Were he to make the transgressor this enemy of all good, this author of universal and absolute misery, in the highest degree miserable, that would put at rest the question of his own supreme abhorrence of transgression. None could doubt that he is a being of perfect benevolence, and has the necessary feelings of such a being toward wrong moral action. If this be not done, then he can furnish no proof that such is his character. He furnishes decisive proof to the contrary. The appropriate necessary expression of his highest abhorrence of rebellion is not made. Whatever may be the reason for refusing to do it, it is an insufficient reason. He furnishes not the shadow of evidence that he acts upon the principle of immutable rectitude of benevolence. He does not show that he has that supreme abhorrence of rebellion which a benevolent being must have, and as a perfect governor. must show himself to have. There is no evidence that he does not inflict suffering, regardless of every good and sufficient reason for inflicting it--regardless of every principle of rectitude, and therefore as a matter of caprice or despotic humor, at least as the dictate of the selfish principle. There is proof rather that he is actuated by the selfish principle. Not acting in the relation of a moral governor, as a benevolent being must act, he proves himself to be a selfish being. Why then, if disposed, will he not inflict

greater suffering on the obedient than he inflicts on the disobedient I What confidence can be Placed in the character of such a being I What authority or right to reign can he possess?

Again; the moral governor, by not inflicting the highest possible suffering on the transgressor, shows that he esteems the transgression of his law a less evil than the infliction of such a penalty. Transgression, if unpunished in one instance, utterly destroys the authority of law--destroys the highest happiness of all of which the authority of the law is the necessary means, and produces all the misery, of the prevention of which the authority of law is the necessary means. When transgression occurs, the alternative on the part of the moral governor is, either to consent to the destruction of his authority with these fearful results, or to sustain it, by expressing his highest disapprobation of transgression in the infliction on the transgressor of the highest degree of suffering. Such being the alternative, he shows, by refusing to inflict the supposed penalty, that he prefers a far greater evil to a less. No matter what the reason or motive may be, none can be supposed for not inflicting the requisite penalty, which will not bring upon him the imputation of preferring the destruction of his authority, and the production of all the misery, the prevention of which depends on its support, to the infliction of that penalty on the transgressor which is requisite to maintain his authority, and to prevent the evil resulting from its subversion. By refusing to inflict this penalty, he shows that he esteems such a deed, with its ruin and its miseries, a less evil than the infliction of the highest degree of suffering on the author of the deed. By the infliction of such a penalty, its evil tendency would be counteracted and its results prevented; and yet the moral governor refuses to inflict it. He becomes therefore the voluntary responsible author of all this evil. Who would or could confide in his character, or submit to his authority?

Once more; if the moral governor does not inflict the highest possible suffering on the transgressor, there can be no evidence or proof that he would inflict such a penalty, if it were necessary to secure the obedience and perfect happiness of all, and to prevent the disobedience and perfect misery of all forever. I do not say, as some have said, that this penalty is

necessary to the result now specified. But I affirm that there can be no proof that there is not. The moral governor's declaration would be no proof on this point, for as yet his character for benevolence and veracity is not established. There can therefore, be no possible evidence or proof in the view of his subjects, that the supposed penalty is not necessary to secure the obedience and perfect happiness of all, and to prevent their disobedience and perfect misery forevermore; and therefore, none that the moral governor, with the knowledge of this necessity, would inflict the penalty--no proof that he would punish a single individual, were it necessary on the one hand to make his kingdom a paradise of holiness and joy, and on the other to prevent it from becoming a pandemonium of sin and misery; no proof that he does not prefer the destruction of the perfect happiness and the production of the perfect misery of all, rather than inflict the same evil on one who is the author of the direful result; no proof that the least security, the least barrier against sin, exists in the character of the moral governor; that holiness and its joys will not utterly cease to exist, and sin and its woes reign without restraint and without mitigation; the universe become an unqualified hell, and the moral governor stand revealed in his true character, a selfish, malignant being, the accessory of the transgressor, the patron of sin, the responsible author of the eternal misery of all. Such, according to the evidence in the case, and in the view of his subjects, would be the character of a moral governor who should refuse to inflict the highest degree of suffering, as the penalty of transgressing the best law.

It can hardly be necessary to say, that according to the view now given of legal penalty, the suffering of the transgressor, if it be possible, must be unmingled. and eternal. The only supposable case in which an Omnipotent moral governor cannot inflict unmingled suffering, is that of a penitent, reformed transgressor. The natural possibility that a transgressor, under a system of mere law, should reform or return to duty, and the impossibility of rendering such a one perfectly miserable, or as miserable as he might be rendered without reforming, may be admitted. On the supposition however of the reformation of a transgressor, he would still be capable of suffering in some degree; and the highest degree of suffering possible in his case, would fully evince the moral governor's highest disapprobation of his transgression. It would, as such

an expression, fully establish his authority, and would be necessary for this purpose. In the case of the impenitent transgressor, unmingled suffering would be possible, and is therefore the degree of suffering which, in his case, is requisite to sustain the moral governor's authority. Its eternal duration is possible, and therefore in all cases it must be eternal, that it may answer the end of a legal penalty in a perfect moral government.

Some objections to the view of legal sanctions, which has now been given, demand consideration.

Objection 1. It is said, that on the principle, that reward is to be continued only while obedience continues, it follows, that punishment is to be continued only while disobedience continues; in other words, that the repentance or reformation of the transgressor is a just ground of forgiveness and favor from the moral governor.

This objection derives all its plausibility from a false view of the essential claim of law. It supposes that law does not in its very nature claim uninterrupted obedience, or that present conformity to law, however frequently it may have been interrupted by transgression, is still obedience, and as such justly entitled to the reward. If this be so, then all that the law claims is to transgress and reform. The claim of the law is satisfied by transgression and reformation. To transgress and reform, is obedience to law by satisfying the claim of the law. To transgress and reform is therefore all that the law does, or can justly demand of its subjects. Without affirming that the lawgiver in such a case would prove himself to be as well pleased with transgression as with reformation on the part of the subject, it is plain, that he shows himself to be as well pleased with transgression and reformation as with uninterrupted obedience. This is too absurd to be maintained by any. But why is it, that when obedience ceases, reward must also cease, and punishment begin, never to cease? It is because the law of a perfect moral government requires, and to deserve the name of law must require, the uninterrupted obedience of the subject, and because the lawgiver can sustain his

authority by the sanction of reward, only by rendering reward to that which satisfies the claim of law. In rewarding for uninterrupted obedience, he rewards on the only possible ground of a just legal reward--that the claim for uninterrupted obedience is satisfied by the subject. In this way only can the reward become an expression of his highest approbation of that which satisfies his claim on the subject, and thus support his authority. If obedience be interrupted by an act of disobedience, the claim of the lawgiver is not satisfied by the subject, and never can be. Of course the only ground of conferring a reward, by which the lawgiver can accomplish the end of a legal reward, does not exist, and never can exist. He can express no approbation of the subject by a reward conferred on the ground of his satisfied claim. If he express approbation at all, it must be in view of his claim, as unsatisfied and violated by the subject who is rewarded. By such an act, he relinquishes his claim for uninterrupted obedience,--allows transgression, which, in one instance, is the destruction of all good. He shows himself satisfied with, and approving transgression, by becoming the friend and patron of the transgressor. The reason then is obvious, why uninterrupted reward, according to the very nature of law, is exclusively connected with uninterrupted obedience, viz., the claim, and only claim of law on the subject, is satisfied by such obedience, and can be satisfied by nothing else. The reason is equally obvious, why uninterrupted punishment is connected with interrupted obedience, and not exclusively with uninterrupted transgression--viz., the claim, and only claim of law on the subject, is not satisfied by transgressing and repenting, but is as truly unsatisfied and violated as by continued transgression.

Again; it is objected, obedience during a limited period, does not deserve a future endless reward, while disobedience in one instance does deserve an endless punishment. The good and ill-desert of conduct in a subject of moral government are to be determined by, or rather they are themselves the relations of his conduct to the support and the subversion of the moral governor's authority. The obedience of the subject supports the moral governor's authority so long, and only so long as it is rendered. It does not extend its influence in this respect through all futurity, and thus give eternal support to the lawgiver's authority. The subject while obedient, fulfills only a present obligation, and satisfies a present claim.

He therefore does nothing, and can do nothing which can have any influence to sustain the lawgiver's authority beyond the present effect of his present obedience. Whether he will support this authority in the future, depends on his future obedience. Having then given no support by his obedience to the authority of the lawgiver for the future, he can deserve no reward for so doing. The sole reason for conferring upon him a reward for his obedience is, that his obedience supports the lawgiver's authority, while it is rendered. If then his obedience ceases, so does its influence in this respect and with it every reason for a reward, and of course all desert of reward. But this is not all. The subject, by ceasing to obey becomes disobedient; and by this one act, if its influence be uncounteracted by the execution of penalty, he destroys the authority of the moral governor forever. he can in no way prevent the effect, either by doing or by suffering. He is as ill-deserving as were the effect to follow, as had he laid the authority of the moral governor in ruin forevermore, and must himself remain as ill-deserving forever. His ill-desert can neither be diminished, canceled, nor annihilated. The relation of transgression to law, its tendency to destroy its authority and to subvert moral government is eternal. It is true, the moral governor, by the execution of the legal penalty, can counteract this tendency, can prevent the actual effect, can uphold his own authority. He can do this however, not by annihilating the transgression of his law, nor its tendency to destroy his authority, but only by punishment as his continued act, expressing his continued supreme disapprobation of the transgressor. The punishment cannot change at all the nature and tendency of the transgression. It simply in the manner already explained, counteracts this tendency of transgression, and thus holds back the effect which would follow the moment in which punishment should cease. The sole reason for inflicting the penalty of law is not diminished nor removed by its infliction for any limited period. Of course the ill-desert of transgression is not lessened nor removed by such an infliction. The entire influence of the penalty is to uphold the moral governor's authority, as a continued expression and proof of his highest disapprobation of transgression. As the tendency of transgression to destroy his authority is eternal, the expression of his highest disapprobation of transgression in the form of legal penalty must be eternal.

Let us look still further at the doctrine under consideration. The principle on which the doctrine rests is, that equity or justice demands that the penitent reformed transgressor of law be forgiven and rewarded. It is to no purpose to say, that the act of forgiving the penitent transgressor is an act of sovereignty on the part of the lawgiver; for it cannot be vindicated as such under a merely legal dispensation, unless it be consistent with benevolence in the form of general justice; and if it be consistent with general justice under such a dispensation, that the subject of law be exempted from the penalty of law, then it must be inconsistent with general justice either to threaten to punish, or actually to punish him for transgression. Of course justice forbids his punishment, that is, demands his exemption from the legal penalty. His exemption therefore is not by sovereignty.

In respect to this principle, I remark, that it is a groundless and unauthorized assumption. Who will pretend that he either knows or can prove, that the great ends of a perfect moral government and of infinite benevolence can be secured by such a principle? Who can know or prove, that were the moral governor to act on this principle in a single instance, it would not defeat every design of infinite goodness, and fill the universe with unmingled and unending woe?

The principle derives no support from the practice of human governments. Whatever may, be the ground of pardon in these cases, it is not the principle of equity, or justice. When has the principle been recognized and proclaimed in the family, that murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, or in the state, that traitors, conspirators, men reeking with crime and blood, are justly entitled to pardon and reward on condition of repentance? On this principle, the vilest malefactor cannot be justly punished, until it is first ascertained that he is not a penitent; for being so, he has an equitable claim to pardon and reward. Why then in the name of all that is sacred in human rights, is not this principle of equity recognized and acted upon? Why is not a court of equity established to vindicate these rights of injured innocence?

On this principle a lawgiver has no right to punish transgression of law at all, but only to punish impenitence after transgression. It is not rebellion, but solely the want of repentance.

So also the transgressor of law cannot be justly punished for transgression which only deserves punishment. And if he cannot be justly punished for transgression, he cannot be justly punished for that which only deserves punishment; cannot be justly punished for that for which alone he can be justly punished.

On the same principle repentance itself is impossible. There can be no repentance where there is no guilt or ill-desert. But if there is no ill-desert except in the want of repentance, then there is nothing in transgression which can be repented of. The transgressor has no reason to repent of any thing whatever, or at most of a transgression which furnishes no ground or reason for repentance. Is it said, that by repentance, the transgressor acknowledges that it would be just to punish him for his transgression? Then plainly justice does not require that he go unpunished, i.e., that he be pardoned for his repentance. Besides, if it is just to punish, benevolence or the general good requires punishment. How then can justice, benevolence, or the general good require his punishment, and also his exemption from punishment?

On this principle, there is nothing in transgression or sin, neither guilt nor ill-desert to be forgiven; nothing except impenitence after transgression. But there can be no impenitence; for impenitence implies previous sin, guilt or ill-desert. So that there can be nothing to be forgiven, neither sin nor impenitence. Forgiveness therefore is impossible and inconceivable. There can be no grace in forgiveness; for grace is favor or kindness to the guilty, and there is no guilt in transgression, nor yet in impenitence. There can be no influence to deter from transgression in law nor authority; nor in any thing else an influence to prevent any thing but impenitence and this can have no existence. Repentance for sin cannot be a duty, for sin or transgression involves nothing to be repented of. There can be no reason on the part of the moral governor for prohibiting

sin; nor for displeasure should every subject transgress his perfect law; for the only evil in the case is impenitence after transgression, which impenitence itself is impossible. Nor can the moral governor with the least reason or propriety require obedience to his law; for as there is nothing morally wrong in transgression, there can be nothing morally right in obedience. In short, the principle that justice requires the forgiveness of sin on condition of repentance, subverts all moral distinctions, and every relation between the moral governor and his subjects.

This subject may be presented in other lights. Let it be supposed that a penitent transgressor is forgiven and restored to favor. The natural and authorized conclusion on the part of any and every other subject is, that if he transgresses and repents, he also shall be forgiven and restored to favor. What then is there in the legal penalty to prevent transgression? Nothing. Its sole influence is, as so much natural evil, to deter from impenitence after transgression; for the moral governor has authorized the conclusion, that, by repentance, the penalty shall be avoided. What the moral governor then aims at, by an absolute prohibition in the form of law with the absolute threatening of the penal evil, is not to prevent sin, but only to prevent its continuance. For aught that appears, he is as well satisfied with transgression and repentance, as with uninterrupted and perfect obedience. Is such a ruler entitled to respect; has he a right to reign? Or thus: what is there in the law to prevent on the part of every subject, a continued series of alternate acts of transgression and repentance? Nothing. As the law threatens to punish, not transgression, but only impenitence after transgression, and as transgression according to the supposition is followed by repentance, there can be no place for punishment. Let it then be supposed, that acts of transgression and of repentance occur in a series at such intervals as you please to imagine, and what shall be said of the government and the character of the lawgiver? Can he be entitled to respect, or possess the least authority, or the lowest possible qualification to rule? In such a case, how could it appear that the governor would annex an endless penalty to transgression if he knew that it would prevent all transgression? And if this could not be known, how could it appear that he would annex such a penalty, though he knew it to be necessary to prevent universal and endless transgression without repentance, and with the complete and

endless misery of his kingdom?

Without however dwelling longer on the absurdities of this principle, there is one incontrovertible fact which must exempt this part of the subject from all difficulty and doubt, viz., that sin or transgression on its first existence, is the fit object of the highest disapprobation, and therefore requires the highest degree of penal evil. Sin, or the transgression of law, is a principle of action in a moral being, and in its essential nature, is at its first existence one and the same thing which it is in its continuance. It is true, that by continuance, in certain circumstances, its strength as a principle of action may be increased, and also its ill-desert. In some circumstances, this is undeniably true. Under the reclaiming influences which they resist, evil men wax worse and worse. Placed under such influences, they are under the necessity of forming the selfish principle *de novo* with greater or less frequency, and thus greatly increase the strength of the selfish principle--their wickedness and guilt.

By continuance, it may also extend its actual desolations, and reveal to us more clearly its fell malignity; and thus its intrinsic turpitude and ill-desert may be judged by us to be greater than in its beginning. But the question now is, not whether it becomes deserving of penalty by increasing in strength, or by developing its malignant tendency to our observation in actual results. But the question is, whether sin becomes ill-deserving or deserving of penalty by mere continuance; or whether it would cease to be ill-deserving by being repented of? I answer, that the mere continuance of the same principle both in kind and degree, neither gives it its ill-desert nor increases it one iota. Sin continued, differs not from sin begun, except in the mere circumstance of continuance, which can in no respect change the nature of sin or increase its ill-desert. Sin, when it first exists, is and must be, in its nature, tendency, and every essential relation of sin, all that it ever is or ever can be. In its true nature and tendency, and in the lowest degree of strength in which it can exist in the mind, and whether it produce its appropriate results or not, it prostrates law, authority, and moral government--it destroys all happiness and produces all misery. It does not therefore become the fit object of the highest disapprobation by its continuance, nor by the impenitence of the

transgressor, nor yet by any thing connected with or dependent on its continuance. It is so in its essential nature. As such an object, as demanding the expression of the moral governor's highest disapprobation in penal evil, it is, when it first exists, all that in its nature which it ever can be. The transgressor in his first act of transgression, strikes the death blow at all good, and puts his hand to the production of complete and universal misery. Then it is that the deed is committed--done in heart -- requiring no continuance, no repetition, no overt acts, no results in woe, to give it its full measure of ill-desert as the transgression of law. Were the full results of one sin instantly to follow its commission--the destruction of all good, and of all the means of good, with woe unmingled, complete, universal, and, without the execution of the supposed penalty, eternal, who would not see in these results the nature and ill-desert of sin, without supposing its continuance--would not see that its nature and ill-desert could not be changed by repentance, when its work was done? Suppose now, that the execution of the supposed penalty in comparatively a few instances would retrieve the evil, and cause a universe of joy, bespeaking the benevolence of its author, and lasting as eternity, to rise on these ruins, would not the execution of the penalty be demanded by benevolence; would not every voice of reason and of conscience respond, 'The judgment is righteous altogether?' But if the supposed execution of the penalty would be demanded to retrieve the evil, why is it not required to prevent it? We say that it is, as truly as a perfect moral government is demanded by the highest good which an infinite Being can produce. Sin then, as sin, does not derive its ill-desert in the lowest degree from impenitence, nor can its ill-desert be lessened by repentance. Being what it is in its essential nature, and viewed as a principle of action irrespectively of any increased strength of any actual results in evil, either natural or moral, and continuing but for a moment, it is the fit object of the highest disapprobation, and demands the highest degree of natural evil as its penalty.

Objection 2. It may be said, that as punishment can be justified only on the principle that the greatest good requires it, it would follow, that if all the subjects of a moral government should rebel, benevolence would forbid their endless punishment. If it be admitted, that in the case supposed, benevolence would forbid eternal punishment, it does not

follow that it would forbid it in any actually existing case, nor in any case in which a benevolent being can be supposed to adopt a perfect moral government. Nor, to apply the objection to this world, and supposing all to be in a state of disobedience, does it follow, that benevolence might not inflict eternal punishment on all. It cannot be shown that the moral governor might not punish rebellion to whatever extent it may be supposed to exist in this world, and yet, by creating other worlds, produce on the whole an amount of creature happiness equal to that which would exist without the supposed punishment. The possibility of his so doing seems to be distinctly recognized in the Scriptures; and the admission of it is also important, if we would duly appreciate the mercy of God in the work of redemption. "Think not," said John the Baptist, to the unbelieving Jews, "to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." As if he had said, God can destroy you forever, and yet glorify himself by creating and blessing other beings. This is possible truth, and as such, it fully overthrows the present objection, as applied to the endless punishment of every human being. Such a punishment of the race may be consistent with God's benevolence. If it here be asked, why then did not God actually adopt this course? I answer, not because as a benevolent being he was under the necessity of adopting another--not because he could not secure as much I do not say he could secure more, creature happiness, by the punishment of this world and the creation of another, as by the redemption of this; but because, viewing this world as actually created--for it must be so, if we suppose it to deserve punishment--it may be true that he could himself find more happiness in blessing with redemption creatures already existent, than by creating others to be the subjects of an equal degree of happiness. He would thus derive the decisive motive to redemption from himself, and not from a greater amount of creature happiness. In this view of the subject, with what emphasis does he say, "Not for your sakes do I this, but for my own great name's sake." How rich is such mercy compared with that which benevolence, as is supposed, requires him to show to guilty beings. The Christian must admit that it is, and the infidel that it may be, consistent with God's perfect benevolence to punish a revolted world with everlasting destruction.

More can be said on this point. Whether benevolence requires the eternal punishment of the transgressors of law in any actual case or not, it is undeniable, that there cannot be a perfect moral government without it as the penalty of transgression. According to the principles already presented, every subject in this case, would be authorized and required to believe, by decisive evidence, that the moral governor does not regard the transgression of his law with the highest disapprobation. He does not punish on this principle, but plainly shows that he esteems it of less consequence that his law is transgressed, than that penalty be inflicted on the transgressor, which is requisite to sustain his own authority as a perfect moral governor. He would that the rebel should be made less than completely and eternally miserable, rather than secure and employ the necessary means of the highest happiness of all for eternity; yea, rather than furnish so far as any evidence to the contrary is concerned, the necessary means of preventing the absolute misery of all for eternity. He shows that he does not regard obedience to his law as the supreme good, and disobedience to his law as the supreme evil. He shows himself too kind, too indulgent to the rebel, to make him as miserable as the support of his own authority and the highest happiness of his kingdom demand. In a word, he shows himself to be truly a selfish and malignant being. And what is law, authority, or moral government in such a case, but a pretense and a mockery? To talk of a perfect moral government then, in a case in which benevolence will not allow the authority of the governor to be sustained by an endless penalty, is only to say, that a perfect moral government in such a case, is impossible; that benevolence itself forbids the necessary means of the highest happiness.

Objection 3. It is said, that it is incredible and impossible that benevolence should adopt a moral government with a legal penalty consisting in the highest degree of natural evil. I answer, that to assume the impossibility and incredibility that benevolence should adopt such a system, is wholly gratuitous and unauthorized. It cannot be shown, nor can it be rendered in the lowest degree probable, that such a system of moral government is not the necessary means of the best end which an infinitely perfect Being can accomplish. The supposition that it is, involves no contradiction or absurdity. It may not only be true, that such a system is the necessary means of such an end, but that the end is so great that

the supposed penalty in its actual execution, is in the comparison insignificant, an evil scarcely to be accounted of. Great as the evil may be to the individual sufferers, it is to be estimated not simply as related to them, but as related to the great, end of the system--the end which an infinite being can accomplish only by means of it. This principle is familiar to every mind, and constantly recognized by right reason as indubitable. Why are the crimes of murder and treason punished with death, and this too considered only as fatal to certain great interests of time? Is not death a most fearful evil to man, viewed as a being of time only? Why then is it made the penalty of some single acts of transgression? Because the interests which one such act destroys, the great ends of human society can be secured by no other means. Do you say that the unmingled and endless misery of a being is an evil so immeasurably great, that it is incredible that there should be any necessity for it as the means of good? But remember and admit, that the failure of the end which it may be necessary to secure, may be an immeasurably greater evil. If you refuse to admit this, you are not a fair reasoner. If you do admit it, then why should it be thought incredible, that the penalty of the law should be the unmingled and endless suffering of the transgressor? If the limited and comparatively inferior interests or end of an earthly kingdom, demand for their security the penalty of death, why may not the penalty under consideration be justly, inflicted on him who would destroy the interests and defeat the end of an eternal kingdom. Why may not an infinite Being propose an end, the accomplishment of which shall require the infliction of the highest degree of natural evil on those who would otherwise defeat that end, who would even fill his creation with unmingled and endless woe? The sum total of penal evil actually inflicted under this system may be ten thousand times less compared with the actual good of which it is the necessary means, than the penal evil in any kingdom, state, or even family on earth compared with the good which results from it.

On this subject, if we would not be led by feeling instead of reason, we must think Of THE END--the happiness to be produced--the misery to be prevented--the end worthy of an infinitely perfect Being, and which shall be a full expression and manifestation of his infinite attributes--the end which such a Being will and must accomplish! And who shall prescribe limits to this, and undertake to tell how much evil may be justifiably

incurred in its accomplishment? But it will probably be said, that infinite power can dispense with the supposed penalty, and that thus its necessity is wholly superseded. I answer, that a perfect moral government is the necessary means of the end proposed; and that no degree of power can dispense with such a system, nor with any thing necessary to its perfection. Perfect benevolence must adopt the system. Power can in no respect interfere with or change its nature. Omnipotence is here under a restriction from the nature of things, the government of free moral agents. The power of an infinite Being is as truly restricted by the nature of the subject as the power of man? What can power do? It cannot secure as its proximate effect right, nor can it prevent wrong moral action. It cannot destroy the power of moral beings to act morally wrong without destroying their nature. In the language of Dr. Dwight,

Men are beings possessed of the full power to originate any and every moral action." With this view of the nature of men as moral beings, it is absurd to talk of God's producing in them either right or wrong moral action by dint of power; as really so as to talk of producing thought and volition by a machine, or breaking rocks with arguments, or governing the winds by motives. I am not saying that God cannot by influences consistent with the nature of moral agency in men, in many instances, prevent wrong and secure right moral action. But I affirm, that in view of the nature of moral agency, it is impossible to prove that God could prevent sin in the best moral system. Moral agents can act morally wrong under every possible influence from God. To suppose him to prevent all wrong moral action on their part in all cases, may, for aught that can be shown to the contrary, be supposing him to do what in certain cases he cannot do, that is, that he can do in certain cases, what he cannot do. Vide MATT. xiii. 24.

The system of a perfect moral government now maintained impossible, is credible, though moral evil and its eternal punishment in some cases be a foreseen and actual consequent. It may be true that it is the best--the necessary and only means of the best end which an infinite Being can accomplish. It may have in his estimation more value than all the worlds and beings which he has created; the end which he can accomplish only

by a perfect moral government may be so great and good, that compared with it, the eternal destruction of such a world as this, nay, of thousands of such worlds, would be only as an infinitesimal compared with infinitude. It may at least be true that it were better, that heaven and earth, the created universe, should pass away, than that one jot or tittle should pass from the law.

Do you say that this is telling what may be, that it is going off into the unknown regions of possibilities? I know it. But that is where your objection goes, and we must follow. You say it is impossible that God should adopt such a system as I have described. I show you that you cannot prove it, and have therefore no right to say it. Confess the possibility of such a system, and so take back your objection and I am satisfied. My argument will then remain in unimpaired force.

I have thus in several lectures attempted to show what a perfect moral government is, dwelling more particularly and fully on the nature of its legal sanctions. In conclusion, I propose to make a few brief reflections on the subject and the manner in which it has been treated.

You must have seen that the principles which I have attempted to sustain by reason are those which belong to the Christian system. If my endeavor has been successful, I have furnished on the authority of reason a full vindication of these great principles of Christianity, and have thus in effect refuted every objection to Christianity which is derived from these principles. More particularly --

If the view now given of the nature of moral government be correct, and if it be conceded that God is the perfect moral governor of his moral creation, then a strong not to say the strongest objection of the infidel against Christianity is removed, viz., that its law, or rather the law on which this system rests, involves such a fearful penalty. Most infidel writers, Paine not excepted, have conceded and applauded the excellence of the Christian morality--they have praised the law of

Christianity, but have denounced its penalty. In view of what has been said in these lectures, I ask, what excellence would pertain to this law without its penalty? Would it propose or require the best kind of action, and so far as its excellence as a rule of action should be understood, furnish strong motives to obedience? Be it so. But it would not be a law the law of a perfect moral government; for it could possess no authority. It could not with propriety be called a rule of action. It would be advice merely; leaving the question of conformity to the discretion of those to whom it is given, fully authorizing them to do their own will without the least respect to that of God. Yea, promulged in the form of law, it would subvert all authority in God, disprove his goodness, and justify abhorrence of his character and contempt for his government. It would reveal not even such a God as guilt makes welcome, but a being who would fill the moral creation with terror. And would such a law be excellent? What if it proposed right action, while it revealed such a being on the throne of the universe, while itself was known to be--not the law of truth, not the will of perfect benevolence, but a lie of infinite malignity! Call this a rule of action, law, authority, moral government! It were but the pretense, the mockery of it in the hands of an omnipotent fiend--the very patronage of iniquity, sanctioning its unrestrained perpetration, and exemplifying its horrors in the unmingled and unending miseries of the universe. Why is it that man cannot see here, what they see and know everywhere else? Who doer, not see and feel the power of law when administered by that supreme regard to the general good, which never wavers, never flinches, but carries it out in the full measure of its penal inflictions, whoever may be the transgressor? Were this the principle of our civil rulers, were it fully understood and known that law was in the hands of such a principle, what might and majesty it would possess! What would become of the crimes that stalk so openly and shamelessly before our eyes? And if you want an illustration of the imbecility of law contemned and fit only to be contemned, look at the too frequent use of the pardoning prerogative by the executive of our states, and at the riots, bloodshed, and murders perpetrated in anticipation of such clemency. If an armed mob in a great city, infuriate to desperation, can so impressively tell us what a law without a penalty is, why can we not learn, that a law from God without a penalty revealing the feelings and the character of a perfect Being, would be no law, worse than no law, a calamity and a curse to his moral creation? Let us then judge of the law of God as it is; judge of it with those sanctions which reveal a perfect

God; judge of it in its true tendency, as the only law which is fitted to bring--as actually bringing the will of every moral creature of God into subjection to his will--then shall we see that the law of the Lord is perfect, that were God to give a law to moral beings without a penalty revealing his holiness, nay, his full abhorrence of sin, it would veil in darkness his brightest glories--would be the most fearful act of infinite malignity.

And here, I venture to say, that the main principle in the reasonings of infidels is subverted, and their stronghold is broken down. Who does not know, that the most plausible and the most successful assaults on Christianity derive their force from the fearful, and as it is represented, the incredible nature of its sanctions. How much has been said and written on the subject, to throw Christianity beyond the boundary of human credibility! as if the supreme Lawgiver of the universe had nothing to do in his administration, but to caress the foundlings of his love, and to scatter blessings among them whether obedient or disobedient! How often are appeals made to all that is revolting in the cruelty of a tyrant; how often is this contrasted with all that is touching in the tenderness of a mother; as if the governor of the moral universe must be either a Nero or a woman! Surely a mother's tenderness, lovely as it is, does not exactly qualify her to rule a pandemonium! To resort to such appeals in argument then, is not reasoning. To him who knows enough to reason at all on the subject, there is a majesty in law, there is certainly a majesty in God's dominion which looks down with contempt on such expedients to degrade it.

But so it is. Thousands allow themselves to be misled by feeling, and to overlook without a thought, the magnitude of those interests, which for their protection employ, and will forever employ, the attributes of the Infinite Being. Indeed, if there be any case in which there can be no hope of a true verdict, it is when the question arises, what is the just penalty of transgressing the divine law, when the transgressor is the judge? We may safely say, that there is no subject within the limits of human inquiry, on which the human mind is more liable to be unduly swayed by interest and feeling, nor one on which such influence is less apt to be suspected. Argument in moral science depends much for its apparent force and

conclusiveness, on the impression which it makes on the mind. Indifference to truth and error here, is in fact out of the question. In the present instance, our reasoning, instead of meeting sensibilities to welcome and receive its influence, has first to encounter the strongest tide of opposite emotion; and so feeble is its power to impress, that its failure to convince is ascribed almost of course to its intrinsic weakness and insufficiency. Though the argument should be absolutely conclusive, and should utterly baffle every attempt to detect its weakness, it would not be strange should it leave the mind unconvinced, and be itself rejected as sophistry too ingenious to be detected. Nor would it be any more surprising, should harshness of temper, or at least the want of the more tender feelings of our nature, be imputed to the author of an argument which supports so revolting a conclusion.

All this however is unphilosophical. Reproach not the advocates of Christianity for severity of temper, in maintaining what may seem to you, gloomy or even terrific views of God's moral government. How easy is it to recriminate with at least equal plausibility! For what is more terrific than the God of Infidelity? On your scheme, all is uncertainty, darkness, terror. On ours only, is there light and hope even in well-doing. Hell itself giveth both, for it upholds the empire of righteousness.

This is a subject then, which, above all others, calls on us to protect the understanding from all the vagaries of the imagination and all the feelings of the heart. Here if anywhere, should the mind be disciplined to the use of simple intellect, and be prepared to follow the light of evidence, to give up every thing to the supremacy of argument, to adopt conclusions however unwelcome, and to make sacrifices however painful, the moment truth demands them. For truth, be it said to her eternal honor, never can require a sacrifice which our highest good does not also demand.

SECTION II: THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD AS KNOWN BY THE LIGHT OF NATURE.

LECTURE I: God administers a Moral Government In some sense.

Thesis to be established In three leading propositions. -- First, God administers a Moral Government In some sense; for, 1, men are moral beings; 2, God has given them a law. -- Shown from the manifestation of the tendencies of action to good and evil. -- No opposing evidence. -- Perversion of a design does not disprove the reality of the design; nor the fact that such perversion was foreseen; nor that the perversion is universal--The perversion observed may be temporary. Tendency to wrong, not greater than to right action. -- Cause of the certainty but not of the necessity of such perversion. -- The only proper method of reasoning. -- Conclusion.

My object in Several lectures on the subject proposed, is to establish the proposition, that --

GOD IS ADMINISTERING A PERFECT MORAL GOVERNMENT OVER MEN.

For this purpose I propose:

I. To show that God is administering a moral government over men in Some proper import of the language.

- II. To prove the equity of his administration; and --
- III. To prove his rightful authority.

In proving the first of these propositions, we shall show that God is administering a moral government in distinction from a providential government. In proving the second, i.e., the equity of his administration, we shall show that he has given to men the best law; that he strictly adheres to the principles of equity in its administration, and will sustain its perfect authority.

In proving the third, i.e., his rightful authority, we shall show his benevolence or absolute moral perfection. And when these things are shown, the perfection of his moral government is proved.

In the present lecture, I enter on the proof of the first of these propositions, viz.:

I. God is administering a moral government over men in some proper import of the phrase.

I have already defined moral government to be the influence of authority on moral beings, exercised by a moral governor, through the medium of law. To support the proposition now before us, it is necessary only to show that men are moral beings, that God has given them a law, and that he enforces conformity to his law by the influences of authority.

1. Men are moral beings; that is, they possess the powers of moral action, and are placed in the circumstances requisite for their exercise. The fact that men are moral agents, I shall here take for granted; having given what I deem sufficient proof of it in other lectures, and also because I suppose it will not be denied.

2. God has given to men a law, which is a decisive expression of a moral governors preference of some action to its opposite.

That God has given a law to men, I argue, from the fact that he has made them moral beings; in other words, from their constitution and the circumstances of their existence.

Whatever may be the design of our constitution, and the circumstances of our being, of that design God is the author. What I claim then is, that God in creating men moral beings, and placing them in circumstances requisite to moral action, clearly manifests his will or preference, that men should act morally right rather than morally wrong. The proof of this position rests on this obvious and undeniable principle, that the clear manifestation of adaptation or tendency to an end in the structure or nature of any thing which is made, is decisive proof that this end was designed by the maker, provided there is no opposing evidence.

I will now state as briefly as may be, the argument from man's constitution and condition as a moral being, and then show that there is no opposing evidence.

It is then impossible in the nature of things that God should create a moral being, without placing him under a stronger motive--a far higher inducing influence to the performance of right, than to the performance of wrong moral action. Whether a moral agent be created or not, depends on the will of God. But that right moral action is the necessary means of the highest happiness of a moral agent, is eternal truth--truth which no more depends on the will of God, than the equality of all straight lines from the center to the circumference of a circle. Right moral action is benevolent; wrong moral action is selfish. According therefore to the essential and immutable nature of things, right moral action, be the limited temporary self-sacrifice it may involve what it may, tends to secure

the highest happiness of the agent, as well as that of others; and wrong moral action, afford what limited temporary enjoyment it may, tends to secure the highest misery of the agent and of others. These ideas enter into our necessary conceptions of right and wrong moral action as their essential elements. As we cannot conceive of matter without solidity and extension, no more can we conceive of right and wrong moral action, without conceiving of the one as tending to secure the highest happiness, and of the other, the highest misery of a moral being.

There is another philosophy, which maintains that the highest happiness of the individual may come into competition, and so be inconsistent with, the highest happiness of the whole, and that therefore the individual may be bound to sacrifice his own to the general good. This philosophy, endorsed as it is by great names, I regard as absurd and self-contradictory, though admitting that a moral being may be under obligation to sacrifice much and even all of what may be called his own happiness, for the sake of the general good. But there are two facts here which must not be forgotten. The one is, that there must be some motive to this voluntary, sacrifice of his own happiness, for there can no more be choice without a motive than an effect without a cause, and there can no more be motive except in the form of good or happiness to the agent, than there can be motive which is not motive. To suppose a being then voluntarily to sacrifice absolutely all his own happiness for the sake of the general good, is to suppose him to act without a motive, that is, to act with a motive and without a motive at the same time, which is a contradiction and an ab. surdity.

The other fact will explain the mystery. This is, that whatever degree of the agent's own happiness may come into competition with the general good, and which for this reason he may be bound to sacrifice for it, still his own happiness, in one respect--even his own highest happiness--can never come into competition with general good. This is the happiness of being good and doing good; the happiness of promoting the general good, which he can never be required to sacrifice. This is not only his own highest happiness, but it will ever be great in proportion to the sacrifice. Nay more; just and adequate views of the nature of a moral being, and the true tendencies of action on his part, show that if perfectly benevolent, he must be perfectly blessed. To such a being, under every

loss of happiness possible to him, there are fountains remaining, adequate to fill every capacity of happiness, even the fountains opened amid the throne of God and the Lamb. Or in the language of philosophy, such is the nature of a moral being, that perfection in character is perfection in blessedness. This is the fact which gives such peculiar grandeur and glory to a moral agent. Moral agency in its very nature, involves a power so to occupy the mind, so to bless the moral being with the right object of affection, that any loss or sacrifice of good which is possible in the case shall be accounted as nothing. Paul understood this, when he spoke of "suffering the loss of all things, and counting them as dung that he might win Christ," "as having nothing and yet possessing all things."

Such then is the nature of man as a moral being, that his perfection in happiness depends on the use he makes of his powers; in other words, on his moral character. And if it be not true from the very nature which God has given him as a moral being, that one kind of moral action will secure his perfection in happiness, and another produce his perfect misery, then is the eternal distinction between right and wrong action annihilated. I claim Alien, that the obvious and undeniable facts in the nature and condition of man as a moral being supposing no evidence to the contrary--are the most decisive manifestations and proofs that the will of God is, that man should always act morally right rather than morally wrong.

Indeed it is inconceivable, on the supposition of no opposing evidence. that there should be any single source of proof so decisive as this, any so fitted to place the fact of the divine preference of right to wrong moral action on the part of man, beyond all denial and doubt. If the design of the Maker can be discovered from that which is made, if the structure and position of an eye or a tooth show this, then do the nature and condition of man as a moral being, show that he is made to act morally right rather than morally wrong. It is then--on the supposition of no opposing evidence--the will of our Maker, it is the law of God, that man should always act in the exercise of the great principle of love or benevolence.

Our argument is thus far hypothetical. I proceed now to inquire--is there any opposing evidence to set aside or weaken that which has been adduced? All that can be offered is furnished in the fact of the universal perversion of moral agency on the part of man.

All that can be necessary here is to ascertain and apply the correct principle of Judging in such a case. I maintain it to be this--that the perversion of a design clearly manifested in the structure and condition of a thing, which perversion can be easily accounted for consistently with the reality of the design, is no evidence against its reality.

To test the correctness of this principle, let us suppose a watchmaker to have made a number of watches of exquisite workmanship, foreseeing that in the wisest and best disposal of them he can make, they will be so perverted or misused as to defeat temporarily the end to which they are so perfectly adapted. Let it be further supposed, that by giving the requisite information and direction, he shows a most decided preference of the right to the wrong use of them, and with ample skill and power to repair the machinery, and thus in a great degree to redress the foreseen evil, he actually adopts a course of measures which insures such a result. I ask, is the supposed perversion in such a case to be traced to the will of the watchmaker? Is it not rather manifest, that the supposed perversion is a direct contravention of his preference? Do not the perfect structure of the watches, and his directions respecting them, furnish indisputable proof that in every instance he prefers the right to the wrong use of them?

On precisely the same principle of reasoning, I claim that the perversion of moral agency on the part of man, does not furnish the least opposing evidence to that given by his constitution and condition, that God prefers right moral action to wrong. I shall hereafter attempt to show, by the best kind of moral evidence, that he will in fact repair in a great degree the evil done, having actually adopted a course of measures perfectly fitted to such an end. All however that my present purpose requires is, to say that these things may be true. This cannot be controverted. It is possible that

the greatest good required exactly the present system, but not the perversion of moral agency in a single instance, under the present system it may be true, that it is impossible that God should adopt the best moral system and prevent the perversion of moral agency in any greater degree than he does prevent it; it maybe better, that moral agency should in every instance be rightly used rather than perverted under the present system; and of course it may be true that the Creator, notwithstanding the actual perversion of moral agency, prefers that every human being should act morally right rather than morally wrong.

If it be said that God might so have increased the tendencies to right action as to have prevented moral evil, either wholly or partially, I answer; this cannot be proved as I have already shown, and is therefore entitled to no consideration. Besides, to have altered the system in one iota, might have been to change it for the worse, and produced more sin than it would have prevented. The fact then that God did not increase the tendencies to right action, is no proof that he does not in every instance prefer right to wrong action under the system as it is.

Is it further said that the omniscient Creator foresaw the universal perversion of the moral agency, and therefore must have intended or purposed its actual existence? This is readily admitted, admitted as the only truth which can form a basis for confidence, submission and joy, in view of such an amount of evil as exists under the divine government. But I have said the perversion of moral agency may be in respect to divine prevention, incidental to the best system. God then may have purposed the existence of the evil, rather than not adopt the best system to which the evil may be thus incidental. But this fact would give no shadow of proof that he does not prefer right to wrong moral action under this system.

Is it still further said, that all this would be quite credible, were moral agency perverted only by an individual moral agent, but not so in view of its universal perversion by a world? I answer, that the perversion of moral agency by a single world may sustain the same relation to its non-

perversion in other worlds, which its perversion by a single individual would sustain to its non-perversion by all other individuals, even the relation of an infinitesimal to infinitude. Of course this perversion by a world affords no more proof that the Creator does not prefer right to wrong moral action in every instance, than would its perversion by a single individual.

But not to rest the argument on the hypothesis of other worlds. It is sufficient for my present purpose to say, that there may be a future state of existence for man, and that the present may be one of probation in relation to future allotments, even under a redemptive system. The results may show, supposing this to be the only world of sentient creatures, that the greatest good required, not indeed the perversion of moral agency rather than the right use of it under this system, but the very system under which the perversion takes place. Of course it may be true, as I have before shown, that God prefers the right use of moral agency to its perversion, in every instance of moral action under the present system.

It may be still further said on this point: the perfection or imperfection of a moral system is not to be decided, merely by what are or may be only its temporary results in obedience or disobedience, but by its nature, its adaptations, tendencies and probable issues. The reason is, that a moral government may be perfect, and yet result in the temporary disobedience of its subjects. Such possibility is inseparable from its nature as a moral system. It may be in a high degree imperfect, and yet result in temporary obedience; such possibility being also inseparable from its nature. Effects which are good or bad, and which are connected with their causes by a physical necessity, may be the just criteria of the nature of the causes. It is not so however in respect to the supposed results of a system of moral government.

Temporary obedience merely, is no proof of the perfection of a system of moral government, nor is temporary disobedience proof of its imperfection; for such obedience may exist under an imperfect, and such

disobedience under a perfect system of moral government. If therefore, from our knowledge of the system itself--its law, its subjects, its author, his providence or conduct toward his subjects--we have no means of forming a judgment respecting the tendencies and final issues of the system, then plainly we have no sufficient data for any conclusion respecting its perfection. It is indeed quite supposable, that such premises should exist in the case, as not only to warrant, but to demand a conclusion. Be this however as it may, and momentous as the question is, what may prove in the end under a moral government, to be merely temporary results in obedience or disobedience, are an utterly insufficient basis for any conclusion respecting its perfection. If these are the only sources of evidence on the question, then there is none. All that we can say is, the system may be perfect and it may not be. And yet philosophers have derived their principal, not to say their sole objection against the perfection of God's government and God's character, and in this way against his revelation and against all religion, from the existence of moral evil in the world. But who of them all knows whereof he affirms? Who in his ignorance, is certain that any degree of moral evil in this world is inconsistent with such issues of the system in a future state, as shall show, in brightest manifestation, the perfection of the system and the character of its Author?

But it may, here be said, that there is a greater tendency, under the present system, to wrong than to right moral action on the part of all men, and that the author of the system designed that it should be so. That the alleged greater tendency exists under the present system is denied, as involving an absolute impossibility in the nature of things. The objection concedes that men are capable of moral action, and are of course moral beings. But a moral being is one whose highest happiness depends, and who knows that it does, on acting morally right. There can be no tendency to moral action in a moral being, except ultimately to obtain happiness by acting; and the greater the happiness known by the agent to depend on one kind of moral action, the greater the tendency to that action. When he knows as a moral agent must, that his highest happiness depends on his acting morally right, there is of course a greater tendency in his case to act morally right, than to act morally wrong. To suppose a greater tendency in his case to act morally wrong

than morally right, is to suppose that his highest happiness depends, and he knows it, on his acting morally wrong, when his highest happiness does not depend on his so acting, and when he knows that it does not--which is a twofold contradiction, and an absolute impossibility in the nature of things. I am not saying, that a moral being, with that knowledge which is necessary to constitute him such, may not act morally wrong. But I maintain that if he does, he so acts, having the knowledge that his highest happiness consists in acting morally right; and that therefore in so doing, he does not act according to the greater tendency. Nor am I saying, that when a moral agent acts morally wrong, there is not a previous certainty of his so doing; nor that there is not a cause, ground, or reason of such previous certainty. But I maintain that there is nothing in these, which, when speaking reflectively for the purposes of philosophic truth, can be properly called a greater tendency to wrong than right moral action--provided any thing more be meant by the language, than that there is that in the nature of the motive--which in distinction from power is the cause of the wrong moral act compared with the motive to right moral action, that gives the certainty of the wrong instead of the right moral action. I have no occasion to say, that the phrase may not be properly, or according to common usage, applied to the cause of wrong moral action in a further meaning than that now specified, nor do I admit that it can be. It seems to me to be applied, in a further meaning, by none but philosophers, and only by that class of philosophers and divines who maintain the doctrine of necessity as opposed to moral liberty, and to be therefore not a proper, but a mere sectarian or partisan usage. Granting however that common usage sanctions the propriety of speaking of a stronger tendency to wrong than to right moral action, still, as we have before shown, it is in every such case, the language of appearance, and in its actual meaning when thus employed, entirely false. And what if usage sanctions the propriety of the language of appearance, in its false meaning in certain cases and for certain purposes, does this show that it is to be employed for scientific uses? What if, for the ordinary purposes of life, it is proper to speak of the sun as rising and setting; is the astronomer to adopt this language for the purposes of science?

But it may be asked--if there are two opposing tendencies and one

prevails over the other, is not the former a greater or stronger tendency than the latter? I answer, that while this may be said with propriety and with truth in respect to physical or natural phenomena, it cannot in the same meaning be said respecting moral phenomena. In the one case, the opposing tendencies result from the opposing powers of opposing antecedents, as when we speak of the greater force or stronger arm prevailing over the weaker. But in respect to the antecedents of moral phenomena or acts of will, there is no such conflict of opposing powers; and to speak as if there were, is at best to use the language of appearance which in its actual meaning is known to be false. And further, it may be truly and properly said, that there is a greater or stronger tendency on the part of every moral being to morally right than to morally wrong action. If it be asked in what sense, I answer not in that in which, as we have seen, the language would be known to be false, but in a very different meaning viz.: to denote the fact, that in the nature and circumstances of a moral being, as these are actually known to us on a priori grounds, and known as moral causes merely, there is more adaptation or fitness to secure right than wrong moral action. While no one can doubt the propriety of using the language in this application, it cannot be supposed to be so used, except as the language of appearance, and surely not to denote a ground of the certainty of right moral action. So true is it in the proper use of language, that there is a greater tendency to right than to wrong moral action on the part of moral beings in the sense now explained, that, judging on a priori ground, there is far more reason for the conclusion that they will act morally right, than that they will act morally wrong; and that wrong moral action on their part, in view of the tendency to right moral action, is cause for universal astonishment as utterly irrational.

But it will be further asked, how is this if we judge a posteriori--how is it when we see a whole race of moral beings uniformly acting morally wrong instead of morally right? Can we in view of such a fact, say that there is not a greater tendency in their case to act morally wrong than morally right? I answer; first, that without denying the propriety of saying that there is a greater or stronger tendency to wrong moral action than to its opposite on the part of men, inasmuch as the false language of appearance is often proper, I affirm that the only truth in the case to

which such language can respect, is that there is a ground or reason of the certainty of wrong moral action. There can be no evidence from the universal phenomenon of wrong moral action, of a greater tendency to such action in the meaning in which such language may now be supposed to be properly used. There may be and in my view there is, a ground or reason for the certainty of wrong moral action, which fact in the false and harmless language of appearance is mistaken for a stronger tendency to wrong moral action. But there can be no truth in the actual meaning of this language of appearance thus employed. The tendency to right and to wrong moral action in every moral being implies no conflict between opposing powers or influences in which the one overcomes the other as being the superior or greater power or influence. The only power in the case is THE WILL, which is equally adequate to either act. Power or influence as we have shown, cannot be predicated of motive or of any thing which determines the will. Of course no greater tendency which depends on such power or influence can be truly inferred or predicated of it. There is the same possibility, so far as possibility depends on power, to either act instead of the other. In view of this known power and possibility as given by this power, neither the fact of right nor of wrong moral action, nor the uniformity of either, can be the least evidence of a greater tendency to one than to the other, which depends on power or influence. The only sense in which it can be said that there is a greater tendency to right than to Wrong moral action on the part of men, implies nothing which can with truth be called greater power or influence to secure right than wrong moral action, which also gives the certainty of right moral action. Still less can it be supposed that what may be called the less tendency to wrong moral action, should involve any thing in its nature which makes it certain. We are indeed, in view of the fact of wrong moral action on the part of men, obliged to admit some ground or reason of the certainty of such action with power to the contrary. But this is not and cannot be a greater tendency to such action, but is a ground or reason of its certainty, notwithstanding a greater tendency as above explained to right moral action. Such is always the fact when the mind knowingly chooses the inferior good. If it be asked, what gives this certainty of the wrong moral action, we may or may not be able to assign some one antecedent as the cause, ground or reason of this certainty in all cases. It may be the nearness of the inferior good, or it may be the peculiar vividness of the mind's view of it, or it may be any one of many other possible circumstances. Nor is it in the lowest degree incredible, that the

ground or reason of this certainty should vary in different cases, and that no common characteristic of such antecedents can be affirmed, except that they give the certainty of wrong moral action. Be these things as they may, still the mind in every moral choice, knows in the most absolute manner in which truth can be known, that its own highest happiness depends on choosing morally right. Otherwise the choice can have no moral character. I only ask, can reasoning from physical tendencies set aside this truth of absolute knowledge, that the greater is the happiness known to depend on an act of choice, the greater the tendency to that act? If not, then instead of a greater tendency to wrong than to right, there is a greater tendency to right than to wrong moral action, under the present system.

But it may be said, still there is a cause, ground or reason of the certainty of wrong moral action on the part of all men under the present system. This is readily admitted. But this cause, ground or reason of the mere certainty of wrong moral action giving no necessity for it, but implying power to the contrary, may in respect to divine prevention, be incidental to the best moral system. Or thus, the present system notwithstanding this metaphysical imperfection, may be not only better than none, but the best possible to the Creator. This cause, ground or reason of the certainty of wrong moral action may be said to be a tendency to such action. Though it be less than that to the opposite, still it may be a tendency which gives the certainty of wrong action. Some degree of tendency to wrong action is unavoidable in a moral system; and while if it were greater to wrong than to right, it would be flagrantly inconsistent with a moral system, yet that there should be that which gives the certainty of wrong moral action, is not necessarily inconsistent with the Creator's preference of right to wrong moral action under the present system. He may purpose this cause of the certainty of wrong moral action, not as good in itself or as the means of good, but solely as an evil incidental in the very nature of things to the best possible system. He may prefer the existence of this evil and its consequent in wrong moral action, so far as the latter exists, to the non-existence of the best system and for no other reason. But this is no proof, not the lowest degree of probable evidence, that he prefers wrong to right moral action in a single instance under the present system. On the contrary, according to the

present supposition of possible truth, the proof is decisive, that he would prevent this tendency which results in wrong moral action, were it possible to him to do so and yet adopt or not perpetuate the system, that he permits it only as a metaphysical evil inseparable by his power from the best system, and that therefore while he adopts the best system, he prefers in every instance right to wrong moral action under the present system. Nor is this all. Since on the present supposition he prefers the existence of this tendency to wrong moral action solely to the non-existence of the best system, he does not prefer it to a tendency that should give the certainty of right moral action. On the contrary, this tendency to wrong moral action must be a tendency to that which when compared with right moral action, is contrary to his will. Of course his whole will must be opposed to this tendency to wrong moral action, compared with a tendency to right moral action in its stead. The very tendency therefore, alleged as proof that he prefers wrong to right moral action, implies and proves on the present supposition his preference of right to wrong moral action under the present system. And what sort of proof is that of his preference of wrong to right moral action, which for any thing which can be shown to the contrary, may be a decisive proof of the opposite preference.

The grand and only objection to our present position, derived from the tendency to moral evil in the world, and its existence and prevalence, is then without the least plausibility.

Here then I appeal to the great fact on which our present argument rests, viz.: that God has created men moral beings, thus adapting their nature to right moral action, and thus, from the necessity of their nature as moral beings, causing tendencies to right moral action, which clearly manifest his will or preference that they should, in every instance, act morally right. So far as tendencies can have any influence or bearing on the question of what kind of moral action he prefers, the tendencies to right moral action stand forth in the nature and circumstances of the beings, as the great and only fact to be taken into consideration, when the question is, what is his will in respect to the moral conduct of his moral creatures? This fact is proof, uncounteracted by the least opposing evidence, and

therefore unequivocal and decisive, that God prefers right to wrong moral action. Analyze and scrutinize the true nature and tendencies of things as we may, and we must see in what God has done in respect to right and wrong moral action, adaptation, fitness, tendency to one end, and to one end only to right moral action--insomuch that in this contemplation of a moral agent, we wonder that he should ever do wrong. We count all wrong-doing a disorder, and a violence done to the nature and laws of a moral economy. It is eternal necessary truth, that a moral agent is a being so constituted and so circumstanced, that virtue, perfect moral excellence, is the sure and only means of his highest and perfect happiness. All that can be called adaptation, fitness or tendency in the nature and condition of moral beings, is a greater, higher adaptation, fitness or tendency to right moral action than to wrong. The evidence in the case all goes to prove, that the Creator of such beings prefers right to wrong moral action on their part. This will of God stands forth in the nature of man as a moral being in as clear and bright manifestation, as had this been a world of universal obedience to that will. The question of the Creator's preference of right to wrong moral action is not touched at all by the results whether in obedience or disobedience. The system itself so far as any thing appears to the contrary, is not only better than none, but, notwithstanding the evil, is the best which a perfect God could adopt. The question therefore concerning his preference of right to wrong moral action, under this best system, is one which in the very nature of the case, is to be decided in view of its adaptations and tendencies. If the system when thus judged of, is not only better than none, but the best conceivable for aught we know or can say to the contrary, then it is proof decisive, viewed in its true nature and tendency, that its Author prefers right to wrong moral action. If under this same system there had been universal obedience, it would have added nothing to the evidence of his preference, for he would have done no more to secure obedience than he has now done. The proof on this supposition, would be furnished, not by the obedience of, the subjects, but solely by the nature of the system; so that if the system does not prove his preference without, it could not prove it with obedience. So likewise, universal disobedience lessens not this evidence, for he does nothing less to secure obedience than had universal obedience been the result. If then the system with universal disobedience, does not prove his preference, it could not prove it with universal obedience, for the system would be the same on either supposition.

Such is undeniably the true and only legitimate mode of reasoning on this subject. The question is not, what subjects do; but what has the moral governor done? It is not what is the conduct of subjects under the system, but what is the system under which they act? Take an example. Let it be once ascertained that a father has done all that wisdom and goodness dictate to secure the obedience of his children, that the System of influence is perfect, or which is the same thing in the argument, that there is no proof that wisdom and goodness required him to do any thing more than he has done for the purpose, or that to have done any thing more or less would not have been for the worse instead of the better; and his preference of obedience to disobedience is alike conspicuous and undeniable, whether his children obey or disobey. Here then I ask, what other than a moral system, and what moral system better than the present, could God in his infinite wisdom and goodness have chosen, supposing him to be infinitely good? Could he have adopted a system of moral government without creating free moral agents to be governed by the laws of such a jurisdiction? Could he have created moral beings without giving them power to obey or disobey under that system, be it what it might? And now when they act wrong under such a system of influence, which for aught that can be shown to the contrary, is the best fitted to secure their obedience, is their wrong doing to be alleged as proof that he prefers it to their right doing? In an analogous case of human government parental or civil, would disobedience impart the slightest shade of obscurity to the will of the parent or the legislator? Would not a similar system of adaptations and influences be as decisive of a father's preference of obedience to disobedience as had uniform obedience been the actual result? Why then is it not so in respect to God? Why should we not be as charitable in our judgment of our Maker as of a fellow being? Is there no possible case in which law can be transgressed without proving the insincerity of the lawgiver? If so, then the transgression of law is a solecism and a contradiction, for there can be no law when there is no sincerity in a lawgiver. If then we say, that because God is omnipotent, he can secure obedience in every instance, and therefore if he does not, it must be because he prefers disobedience to obedience in that instance, then God cannot give a law--he cannot sincerely prefer obedience to disobedience in any case in which the latter occurs. There is no alternative but this. Either he can prevent all sin in

the case or he cannot. If he cannot, then he may be sincere in the prohibition of it in his law. But if he can and does not, he cannot be sincere in its prohibition in any case in which sin takes place. Disobedience in the subject is decisive proof of insincerity in the lawgiver, and of course that there is no law. But if there is a possible or conceivable case, in which the transgression of a law from God should exist without proving his insincerity, i.e., consistently with his real preference of obedience to disobedience, what is this possible case, except that which we have proved to be real? Were God the friend and patron of iniquity, would he have so formed and ordered all the adaptations and tendencies to righteousness, that the soul of man should find joy unmingled and perfect only in the practice of it? Has God so formed man, even in his own image, that he never can, and knows that he never can be happy but in the consciousness of moral excellence, that he can secure in the highest measure the gratification of every part of his sentient nature, only as he spurns every sensual excess; that he never can feel himself truly ennobled, but by the high resolve of virtuous doings, that he can never rise to his true grandeur and godlike elevation, only as he gives up himself, his passions and appetites, to the control of perfect moral principle--what other conclusion can be drawn from such premises, than that the Being who formed us, loves the virtue that thus exalts, adorns and blesses his creatures, and hates the vice that degrades, deforms and ruins them? Surely the design of the Creator is conspicuous in this universal and undeniable tendency of things. I decide not here that he loves virtue for its own sake, or whether his preference of virtue to vice is a benevolent or a selfish preference, but only that he has this preference. To deny it, is to do violence to the most incontrovertible of all principles--it is to maintain that a perfect adaptation to an end is no evidence that the end is designed, or that the best kind of evidence that God can furnish, is no evidence at all. The most august fact in the creation of God, the moral constitution of moral beings, is divested of all significance in reasoning, and the author of that constitution of the high character of an intelligent and designing Creator. Surely if the sun is placed in the heavens to illumine and warm the earth, if the rain falls to water it and to cause it to bring forth food for man and beast, if food and drink are formed to nourish and refresh our bodies, then is the mind of man created to be conformed to the law of benevolent action. This is the will--this is the law of God. It comes to us in the very nature and structure of the mind--it is given us in the actual cognitions of the inner man, in the

knowledge of ourselves, and therefore in a manner not less distinct nor less impressive, than were it sent in thunders from his throne.

In conclusion I remark, that the question we have now discussed is one of the deepest concern. There is an Infinite Being, who has given existence to man, and made him a moral being. It is the will of his Great Creator that he should act either morally right or morally wrong. On the latter supposition, what is this Infinite Being? He is plainly the most appalling object that ever terrified a frenzied imagination. You cannot conceive of another so fitted to overwhelm with terror and dismay; an Infinite Being preferring wrong to right, moral action! the Great God the friend and patron of iniquity! What ground for hope, for confidence, for joy, could remain under his dominion? Who could pray, or praise, or love, or rejoice? Whose hopes would not perish, whose heart would not break, whose spirit would not sink and die in anguish?

Yet men, to defend their schemes of faith, talk of a benevolent God, who on the whole prefers vice to virtue--sin to holiness! What proof then that every creature of his power, formed in his image, will not become a fiend, and his moral universe a pandemonium? Dream of any thing else, and enjoy it as you may, but dream not, for consolation's sake, of a benevolent God who is the minister of sin! Of all the absurdities that ever disgraced Deism or Universalism, or any other system of faith, that which combines the character of the perfect God and a perfect Devil in one being is the most monstrous.

Shall we then adopt the other supposition? Then there is an Infinite Being, who has given a law to man--whose will it is, that man should always act morally right rather than morally wrong. This Being can make his creature, man, supremely happy or supremely miserable, as he obeys or disobeys his will. What will he do in fact? To impute to him the imbecility of mutable purposes--to suppose the want of all purpose in the exercise and products of his infinite attributes, or an utter indifference to the accomplishment of them, we cannot. If his designs are not benignant, they are at least such in respect to vastness of comprehension, strength

of decision, and grandeur of object, as to exempt their author from contempt; they are such as accord with the infinitude of his natural attributes. He may, for aught we now say, be a benevolent, or he may be a malignant Being. But having infinite power and knowledge, he will not so act as to incur the contempt of his intelligent creation. His designs and doings, in their nature and results, will be great, like their author. They will be such, that human reason cannot look on the reality and make light of it. What then is it for man to know that he is absolutely in the power of such a Being, and that he has always crossed his will!--done what he could to defeat the design of his Creator in giving him existence!! And yet who is the man that has not done it? There is no such man. What then are our prospects? Is death the end of all? That cannot be proved. What then is to be the issue of God's great design in creating man a moral being, the most exalted in kind which he can create? Will it be abandoned in indifference or in fickleness? Will the great design of all his works be relinquished as impracticable by an Omniscient and Almighty Creator? Will it prove to be a plan, for entering on which there were no reasons, or for abandoning which new ones will occur? Will this great design of God toward men, which stands forth first, and brightest, and greatest among them all, come to naught? Will death arrest the whole moral economy of God, and bring on it failure and defeat? I do not say here that it will not. But if it is rational in some cases to hope, is it not as rational also to fear? Were your life, your every interest, thus in the hands of a mysterious stranger of your own species, whose will you had always intentionally thwarted, would you not rationally fear to meet him? And when that stranger is your Creator, the Infinite Being who has made you to obey his will, and you have disobeyed it, have you no concern to know the issues of the design of your creation? Is there to be no full and final consummation of this moral economy? Are your wishes, hopes, fancies, dreams, good evidence that the great question between God and his moral creation will go unsettled, and terminate in insignificant and degrading mockery? Or, have you good reason to expect that you shall one day encounter the displeasure of one whom you have so much displeased? Can the will of any being--can the will of God be crossed, even that will on which the end of his creation depends, and he not be displeased? When you think of the violence done to your own moral nature, and the practical defiance of the known will of the Being that made you; when you listen to that voice of remonstrance and of warning from within which you cannot silence, and to those distinct and

impressive whisperings of self--condemnation which you cannot mistake, do you not know that there is an account between yourself and your Maker yet unadjusted? Can you feel that all is safe? In spite of yourselves, of all your wishes and your hopes, do you not fear a retributive hour--do you not expect to meet an avenging God?

LECTURE II: God enforces conformity to his law by authority.

3. First leading proposition continued. -- God enforces conformity to his law by authority. -- (a) He assumes the right to give a law. -- (b) he dispenses good and evil as powerful inducements; for good and evil are the proper effects of right and wrong action; -- as self-complacency and remorse are enjoyed and suffered; reflection can be avoided only in part; -- (c) The providence of God in other ways works against evil and for good by discipline, restraint, sickness, disappointment, death. -- Forebodings of evil after death.

IN support of the proposition, that God is administering a moral government over men in some import of the language, I have adduced the facts --

1. That men are moral beings.
2. That God has given them a law or rule of action.

I now proceed to show as I proposed --

3. That he enforces conformity to this law by the influence of authority.

By this I do not intend to decide whether he does or does not evince the equity of his administration and his rightful authority. It is common to

speak of the authority of a parent or of a civil ruler, notwithstanding the manifest imperfections in the administration of his government. In such a case, we mean that he assumes and exercises the right to give law or prescribe a rule of action to others, and treats them in many respects, as if this right truly and properly belonged to him. He does so particularly by showing that he can dispense good and evil, and that it is his purpose to do so in such a manner as to create a powerful motive a good and sufficient reason for doing his will because it is his will; in other words, for submitting to it without further inquiry, as the ultimate standard, the true and decisive rule of duty.

It is in this general and somewhat indefinite sense, that I now speak of God as enforcing conformity to his will by the influence of authority. As the parent, whatever imperfections and even inconsistencies may mar the government which he exercises over his children, may still be said to govern by authority, in like manner God governs men. That more than this is true, I shall attempt to show hereafter. This is all that I maintain at present, it being necessary to show that God is administering a moral government over men as distinguished from any other, before I attempt to prove the perfection of his moral government.

I remark, then --

In the first place, that God assumes and exercises the right of giving a law or of prescribing a rule of action to men. We have already shown in the preceding lecture, that God has clearly manifested his will to men in respect to their moral conduct by giving them a rule of action. This is in its own nature an act of sovereign prerogative--an assumption and exercise of the right to govern. The nature of virtue, of right moral action is not a creation, dependent on and coming forth from the divine will. That does not make it right though it may prove it to be so--in other words, it is not right because he wills it, but he wills it because it is right. But the nature of man is a creation, making manifest the design of his Creator in giving him existence. God as the author of man's nature and condition, has placed him under the necessity of acting morally right to secure his own

well-being. He has, etymologically speaking, bound him by the cords of this necessity, that is in common language, placed him under a moral obligation to act morally right. In so doing God claims his conformity to the rule of right action. This God does not by compact, not by permission or consent--but in the exercise of his own supreme right or sovereign prerogative. Thus then the infinite being who made us, assumes the relation of a governor over us by law, thus taking the position of claiming submission to his will, on the ground that he has a right to it. I am not saying that he has this right (this may appear hereafter); but that he assumes it in the very act of giving a law, and that this assumption is itself and by itself, a clear and convincing intimation that he will vindicate and sustain this right, if not perfectly, to that degree which shall entitle it to respect.

No man can think of the greatness of God, how entirely he has the happiness of man at his own disposal-how clearly he has manifested his will respecting human conduct, and especially, how worthy of such a Being is the august relation of a perfect moral governor, without feeling a peculiar influence, an absolute and imperious necessity urging him to unqualified submission to his will.

There is a reason for this. Nothing is more certain than the execution of will, to the extent of the agent's power. On this well known principle it is, that no human being, with the knowledge of God's will respecting his conduct, can contravene it and reflect on what he has done, without the apprehension of some retributive evil, nor perform it without anticipating some expression of his favor. How plainly is this almost instinctive feeling seen in children, nay in friends, neighbors--in all relations, that of utter strangers not excepted. To imagine that men should regard it otherwise in respect to God, is to suppose them ignorant of the great law of voluntary action the law which connects with will the doing of what is willed, and the entire suspension of this law in a Being who is Almighty. Who can believe that God would be pleased with the conduct of creatures who are formed in his own image, and make no expression of his pleasure in good conferred, and be displeased with their conduct, and express no displeasure in evil inflicted? Can the infinite Being show, in the very

nature of men, the end for which he made them, viz., right moral action, that he values the end as all that gives importance to their being, and do nothing which is in any respect fitted to secure the accomplishment, and to prevent the frustration of his will? Why else does he assume and exercise the right to give law? Why appear before his rational and moral creation in the exercise of such prerogative? Why has he entered upon this moral economy, if it is to be abandoned as a disgraceful mockery in the view of his moral creation? Is he too weak to maintain and vindicate the high prerogative he has assumed? This will not be pretended. Will his heart fail him -- will he, in the tenderness of his relings, sink all that is venerable and awful in the character of a lawgiver and judge, in the weakness of parental indulgence; and so consent in the issue to expose himself to the ridicule, the contempt, and the defiance of a mere pretender to authority? Is God to stand before his moral creation, in the assumption of the high prerogative of its sovereign king, and yet in the mere pageantry of one from whom obedience has nothing to hope, and transgression nothing to fear? What an absurdity. Shall God give a law, and leave it unsanctioned by good and evil? Become a lawgiver, but not a judge? Shall his law be distinctly promulged, being written on every heart, and yet no judgment and no retribution follow? No. The mere giving of a law by our Maker is proof that we live under a retributive economy. Law bespeaks a judge. It tells of a throne in heaven, occupied by a living, reigning monarch, who takes judicial cognizance of the conduct of his creatures, and executes legal sanctions as they obey or disobey, his will.

In the second place, God so dispenses good and evil to men in this world, as to create a powerful inducement to do his will because it is his will. By this I mean, that God so dispenses good and evil to men in this world as to influence them to right moral action, not simply by the appropriate tendencies and consequences of actions, but also by the certainty of happiness or misery, as they obey or disobey. The performance or non-performance of an action, in view of its appropriate tendencies and consequences, is one thing. But to perform an action, because by so doing I shall please, and by not performing it shall displease another and a superior being on whom my happiness may or must greatly depend, is quite another thing. The former I might do, were

there no superior being to be pleased or displeased with my conduct. The latter implies a direct regard to the will of another; because he can, and, as I have reason to believe, will dispose of my happiness or misery according to my actions. To be governed by this is to act from the influence of authority. What I now claim is, that God dispenses good and evil to men in this world in order to create this influence; i.e., so that we have reason to believe, that by right moral action we shall secure his favor, with its appropriate expressions in good conferred, and by wrong moral action shall incur his displeasure, with its appropriate expressions in evil inflicted. I am not now saying what degree of good and of evil we are to expect from obedience and disobedience; but that we are led by the actual providence of God to expect good and evil as the consequences of right and wrong action, in such a degree as to make it for our true interest to please him.

I remark then, that amid all the seeming mystery connected with the distribution of good and evil in this world, there is one fact too palpable to be denied, viz: so far as good and evil, happiness and misery, are seen to depend on the moral conduct of man, (and they are seen to depend on it to a great extent) all that good is the effect of virtue, and all that evil is the effect of vice. I know indeed that it is maintained by some, that vice often produces more happiness than virtue would produce in its stead. This I utterly deny. In some cases, greater good appears to follow vice, than we in our short-sightedness can see would follow virtue in its stead. This, be it remembered, is the estimate of our ignorance, and no proof of the fact alleged. Aside then from the groundless nature of this assumption, there is another equally so, viz., that the good which follows vice is its direct and appropriate effect. For in what case is the supposed greater good, which is said to follow, seen and known to be its true and appropriate effect? This is absolutely impossible in the nature of things. Vice consists simply in a selfish or malignant intention, in which the mind proposes to sacrifice both its own and also the greater good of others to the less. The sole tendency of this state of mind is to produce such a result. At the same time, the known tendency of virtue is to produce the greatest good, both to others and to the agent. How then can vice be the true and proper cause of greater good than virtue? How can it be the cause of that which it has no tendency to produce, and when virtue is

known to be the only true and proper cause of the greatest good, in all cases? This can never be till the nature of things is changed, and virtue becomes vice, and vice virtue.

Nor is this all. Whatever good may follow a vicious or wicked action, of that good, the vice or wickedness of the action is not the true and proper cause. I readily admit that vice may, in one sense of the language, be said to be the means, and even the cause of good, viz., it may be followed with good. In this sense, we may properly speak of the pleasures of sin. I also admit, that in all voluntary action of that kind in which man aims to obtain any good, there is a tendency to secure or produce it, and of course that this is true of all voluntary sinful action. But then it is to be remembered that it is true of it only as voluntary, and not as sinful. Bishop Butler has made this important distinction between actions and that quality which constitutes them virtuous or vicious. He says, "An action, by which any natural passion is gratified, or fortune acquired, procures delight or advantage, abstracted from all consideration of the morality of such action; consequently the pleasure or advantage in this case is gained by the action itself, not by the morality, the virtuousness or viciousness of the action. though it be perhaps virtuous or vicious. Thus to say, such an action or course of behavior procured such pleasure or advantage, or brought such inconvenience or pain, is quite a different thing from saying that such good or bad effect was owing to the virtue or vice of such action or behavior. In one case, an action abstracted from all moral consideration produced its effect. In the other case--for it will appear that there are such cases,--the morality of the action, the action under a moral consideration, i.e., the virtuousness or the viciousness of the action, produced the effect." (ANALOGY, P. 1. chap. 3.) To say then that an action which is vicious produces good, is a very different thing from saying that vice, as such, produces good, or that vice, in its own proper nature and tendency, produces or is the cause of good.

Still further; a vicious action which is said to produce good, is complex, consisting of three elements, viz. the selfish preference, which is the governing purpose of the mind, the specific volition to perform the

requisite external action, and the external action itself. In strict accuracy of conception, the vice is exclusively predicable of the selfish principle, and in no degree of the two other elements of the action. If now we look at the true nature and tendency of this selfish purpose, and judge of it in relation to its appropriate effect on the mind, and as wholly uncounteracted by any opposing cause, what is it? Plainly, its tendency is to act on the conscience in instant and overwhelming remorse, and thus to prevent the overt act which is the true and proper cause of the proposed good, and so either to prevent the acquisition or enjoyment of the good. It is only in counteracting this tendency of the selfish principle by at once searing and hardening conscience into a state of insensibility, that the pleasure aimed at can be experienced. Is it then the nature and tendency of this selfish principle to produce happiness in the human mind, when its only tendency, uncounteracted, is to overwhelm it in the instant agonies of remorse? The same remarks, *mutatis mutandis*, apply to virtue. All the good or happiness then which follow vice, and in this sense is said to be produced by it, is known to result from something else than vice as its true and proper cause; and all the evil that follows virtue, is known to result from something else than virtue as its true and proper cause. So that the true tendency of virtue, uncounteracted by opposing causes to produce happiness and nothing but happiness, both to the agent and to others; and the tendency of vice uncounteracted by opposing causes to produce opposite results, are never in the providence of God in the least obscured by the good or evil which may ensue. It follows therefore, that so far as happiness and misery in this world can be traced to the moral conduct of men as their true and proper cause, all that good is, in the providence of God, the proper effect of virtue, and all that evil the effect of vice. I speak not here of that happiness and misery in the World, which are not the direct and proper effects of virtue and vice, but of those which are. Of all this I say, the happiness is exclusively the effect of right, and the misery of wrong moral action. Why then is this? What is the lesson to be learned from this method of God's providence? What is it, but that God is pleased with virtue and displeased with vice? What is it, but that if we would secure the favor and avoid the displeasure of God, so far as these depend on our conduct; and if we would hope to secure good and avoid evil, as these depend on his feelings toward us, we must perform right and avoid wrong moral action? Surely, no rational mind can fail to value the approbation and deprecate the disapprobation of that great Being who holds the welfare of his

creatures entirely at his own disposal, as they shall obey or disobey his will. But how, in view of the laws of his providence, which are as undeviating as the ordinances of heaven--how, except by right action, can we hope or feel the least security that we shall obtain his favor and its blessings, or avoid his displeasure with its evils? How powerful then the persuasive to virtue, as the only kind of moral action by which we can hope for the approval of an infinite Being; and how powerful the dissuasive from vice, as that by which we must expect to incur his displeasure. In other words, how great the motive to do the will of God, because it is his will.

This reasoning will acquire still greater force, if we consider more particularly the appropriate results of right and wrong moral action in self-complacency and remorse. These results, with the delightful anticipations of the one and the painful forebodings of the other, are, in every just estimate of the good and evil of human life, of the highest moment to man. And yet how easily, by different providential arrangements, might the satisfaction we feel in right, and the remorse we feel for wrong action, be prevented. Indeed, it is quite conceivable that these consequences should be so prevented, by the providence of God, as to show on his part an indifference to moral conduct, or even a preference of wrong to right action. Why then is it--for the fact is undeniable--that good men feel that self-approbation, with its sustaining tranquillity and cheering anticipations, which they value above all earthly enjoyments? They are, at best, imperfect in moral character--they have acted the part of rebels against God. How easily then might their offended Sovereign so order their condition as to fill and overwhelm them with remorse for the past, and with despair for the future? What then are the joyful hope and triumphant anticipations of the good man, but the most decisive indications and proofs, furnished by the providence of God, of his friendship and favor? What is this, but God manifesting himself as the friend and patron of virtue, inviting and alluring man to do his will, by giving a present reward to even imperfect obedience.

On the other hand, why does not God conceal all displeasure toward the workers of iniquity? That excessive tenderness which some sentimental

theologians are so fond of ascribing to the Deity, is wont in earthly parents to be very cautious on this point--to be at great pains to hide all displeasure, and to prevent all remorse for offences. Such however is not the method of God in his providence. Instead of being designed for this purpose, his providential arrangements are peculiarly adapted to opposite results. So much so, that it is not possible for men to avoid the full measure of remorse for their sins without much effort--without surmounting great obstacles without doing palpable violence to the most obvious tendencies. God in his providence, as it were, forces this remorse upon them; and in such a manner and in so many ways, that his purpose, that they shall feel it and regard it as an expression of his displeasure for their conduct, becomes conspicuous.

The confinement of the criminal in his solitary dungeon with its inevitable results in reflection and self-reproach, is not more expressive of its design than the providence of God, in securing to such an extent this species of mental suffering in the bosoms of the guilty, is of his purpose to make manifest his displeasure toward them. Who, in the remorse and painful forebodings of conscious guilt, does not feel the tokens of God's indignation? Who, under these frowns of an infinite being does not find a powerful motive to submit to his will and his authority? If we should behold the yet undisclosed spectacle of an assembled world, a judgment seat, and the judge thereon dispensing a full retribution to the righteous and the wicked, we should believe in the authority of God as a lawgiver. Why then do we not see in the retributions of that conscience of which God is the author, as these are disclosed to us in the certainties of experience--why do we not see in this present judgment and execution of the sentence, that God reigns in the exercise, if not of a righteous, at least of sovereign authority.

It is here most readily conceded, that reflection may be avoided, and that by voluntary absorption in sensual pleasure, by diverting thought and sensibility from our guilt, the full effects in remorse of conscience may be avoided. Should it here be asked, if the design of our Maker be, that remorse should follow vice to impress us with a sense of his displeasure, why is it put within our power to avoid the full effect? I answer, that the

possibility of our, so doing may be inseparable from the nature of human mind, and the circumstances in which the greatest good requires that we should be placed. The benignant designs of God may (and we shall see reason hereafter to believe they do) require that man should not be overwhelmed by the agonies of remorse, nor left without its painful and salutary forebodings. Be this however as it may, the fact now alleged does not at all obscure the real tendency of vice to this result. For in every case in which the full measure of remorse is not realized, we know that we have counteracted an actual and powerful tendency to that effect; and that there is nothing in the constitution of the mind which is the natural cause of quietness of spirit as the result of vicious practice. In short there is nothing to conceal, but every thing to make manifest the tendency of virtue to mental tranquillity and happiness, and of vice to opposite results. What then shall we conclude, but that he who is the author of conscience, and who has given it its supremacy and its power to legislate, to judge, and to execute its awards, is himself a lawgiver, a judge, and the executor of judgment? We should be satisfied of the designs and dispositions of a monarch, communicated through the instructions of a well accredited viceroy.

And what are the laws and the lessons of conscience, but those of the viceroy of the King of heaven? If virtue be demanded by the authority of conscience, and if obedience be followed by a satisfaction and serenity which form a rich reward, and if vice be forbidden by the same authority of conscience and visited with the severe though temporary agonies of remorse, then is it as rational to believe that the author of conscience reigns over men as a moral governor, as if we saw him on a throne in the midst of us, giving forth his law with his own voice, and with his own hand dispensing gifts to the obedient and inflicting punishment on the rebellious. The testimony of conscience is entitled to our belief in the one case, as truly as would be the testimony of our senses in the other.

In the third place, the providential dispensations of God in many other forms, duly contemplated, lead to the same conclusion. If men would reason concerning the designs of God from his acts, as they do from the acts of a fellow-creature, no impression I apprehend would be more

strongly made on the human mind than that God reigns over this world as a law, giver; if not on the principles of perfect righteousness, at least in the exercise of sovereign authority. If they were as willing to contemplate God under this relation as under any other, and to form those conclusions which best accord with and explain the design of his providential dealings, they would see God in every thing. And here the first premise in all our reasoning should be the fact, that all men are transgressors of his law; and beyond all question, deserve the highest possible punishment, provided the greatest good requires a perfect moral system. And now, what is the treatment of this sinful world by its Maker but a course of providence, which speaks severe displeasure, even indignation, for their iniquity, mingled with so much forbearance and kindness, as also to manifest his love of righteousness? Who does not endure, in the various forms of pain, disappointment, and other earthly calamity, sufficient evil at least to awaken the thoughts of God's displeasure for his sins; and though not perhaps in his own case, yet in others, how does God permit the same principle of moral evil to go forth unchecked, to desolate human happiness and to break human hearts, that none may be ignorant of its fearful and fell malignity, and of the woes which he will inflict on the determined workers of iniquity? What tokens of the severity of his displeasure toward sin, and of the measure of evil with which he may visit it, does this world furnish! On the other hand, what restraints does he put on human selfishness, and especially in the methods in which he governs it by human selfishness, does he show how he abhors its appropriate doings! To my own mind, this is one of the most striking and affecting facts in his providence--without which the world would become a very pandemonium. By so doing, he compels as it were human selfishness itself to perform the very external deeds which benevolence would dictate, and thus secures to a great extent the results of benevolence, and shows in the most impressive manner, how happy, how blessed the world would become, were benevolence the universal principle of human action, and how it would rejoice him to bless a world of perfect virtue.

There is yet another class of evils, from which a most impressive lesson may be learned. I refer to those (inflicted, be it remembered, on a sinful world) which are not in the way of natural consequence the appropriate effect of sin. In view of these evils brought on mankind, by famine,

tempests, fire, earthquakes, pestilence, and other like causes, whose connection with sin in the way of natural consequence is entirely undiscoverable, what lesson is taught the children of men? Is it said, they are the natural results of the laws of a material system? But who ordained these laws? God, the intelligent, designing author of this moral creation, permits their appalling action on his creatures, all of whom, we know, have incurred his displeasure by sin! Can we then suppose these evils to be imposed without any reference to moral character? Are they all deserved, and is this fact to have no place, in accounting for the infliction? Are these natural and appropriate expressions of the displeasure of their Author toward his sinful creatures, and yet shall we affirm that they are not so? Do you say that they can be accounted for in some other way? But can it be done as consistently with all the facts, and therefore as rationally? And is not the most philosophical solution also the most credible and the best? Suppose God wished to make a clear and strong impression on the human mind of his high and awful sovereignty, in supporting his authority as a moral ruler; suppose that he wished to show us that he might and that he would not confine penal evils to the mere natural consequences of sin, but that, in vindication of his prerogative to reign, he had in store still other penalties for the rebellious. Are not these evils, and the manner of their infliction, exactly fitted to manifest and impress his design? Can any other mode of manifesting it be conceived, so fitted to this end? Do you ask, why are these evils so limited and partial?--why does he not desolate the earth in his anger? I answer, that would conceal his design to restore man to duty and to happiness (as I shall show hereafter). God, it should be remembered, has more designs than one to make manifest to his accountable creatures; and it would not be difficult to show, that his providence is in all respects adapted in perfect wisdom to this great purpose. In some modes and forms of providence he manifests one design, and in other modes another, and without the least conflict or incongruity in doing so. And now I ask, what is that which we are considering--what are tempests, earthquakes, pestilences, which carry desolation and woe over large portions of the earth, in such terrific forms as to compel even God-defying Atheism to cry for God's compassion. There is a way of testing an honest judgment on this question. It is, to put one's self into circumstances in which there shall be no temptation to judge unfairly, but every inducement to judge honestly, for practical purposes. Let any one imagine himself under some of these forms of evil;

the tempest is bursting on his head, the earth is reeling to and fro like a drunken man, the ship is on fire in mid-ocean--every arm is palsied, every face pale with despair, and God only can help--who, despairing of life, would not feel himself to be a sinner, and filled with forebodings of greater evils to come, ask for God's mercy? What then are these evils, honestly judged of, but manifestations of displeasure, which God makes in the exercise of his own irresponsible sovereignty, and in vindication of his high authority as moral governor?

Death, separated from the mode and circumstances in which it takes place, is an evil deserving our serious consideration. What then is death; what is it to all those creatures of God who are able, as God designed they should be, to know and feel it as it is? "Death," in nearly the words of another, "is a most serious and appalling event. It is nature's supreme evil; the terror of God's creation, the monster king, from whose touch and glance every living thing recoils. Death destroys both action and enjoyment; it mocks at wisdom, strength and beauty, disarranges our plans, robs us of our treasures, desolates our homes, breaks our heart-strings, and blasts our hopes." Death separates us from all we know and love on earth, extinguishes affection, confidence, joy, and life itself; it either carries us to God's judgment-seat or it does not--lands us in a state of untried existence or in the gulf of annihilation. "No wonder nature trembles before it. Reason justifies the feat." "It is but a tribute to the value of the life which is our Maker's gift. To make light of death is an outrage on reason, on nature and on nature's God." To such an evil has God subjected man. What is it but an expression of displeasure, an act of awful sovereignty. I do not say what will follow it. I take as it is, a known matter of fact to all God's rational and moral creatures. What is it but a proof of God's displeasure proof that he reigns in vindictive sovereign majesty, avenging his high prerogative to rule, if not in exact righteousness at least in authorizing and compelling reason to fear a more dreadful retribution.

Thus I have attempted to show, that God enforces conformity to his law by that influence which I have called authority. In other words, in view of what God has done in the creation and condition of man as a moral

being, and what he does in his providence over this world, there is a very powerful motive to do the will of God, because it is his will. I now ask in view of what has been said, is there any object more worthy of being made the great end of life, than that of obtaining, the approbation and avoiding the displeasure of that Being who reigns over this world, and who holds all destiny in his hands? Is there any other way in which we can so rationally hope for substantial good, even in this world--any other in which we can avoid fear--not to say terror--in the prospect of leaving it! Say not that all is uncertain after death. Be it so; and this is the most that can be said to alleviate the prospect. All then is uncertain after death! But is it not the part of wisdom to be prepared for the worst? All is uncertain after death! And is no thought to be taken of even possible evils--and is no preparation to be made against them? All is uncertain! But is this all that can be said? Is there nothing probable after death? Look at the facts; God has made man a moral being, fitted to be held responsible for his doings--he has placed him under law as a rule of action--all adaptations, tendencies, the whole nature and relations of things show that if man would be happy, he must be good. Look at your own character. In bold, habitual defiance you have crossed the will, and so incurred the displeasure of the infinite Being who holds all destiny in his hands. Look at his providence. He tells you in a manner not to be mistaken, that he is displeased. He tells you in every painful thought, fear and misgiving, in every sting of anguish that conscience inflicts, in every evil which sin brings upon yourself and every sinner--in the sorrows, tears, woes and death of a groaning creation around you. He tells you also of a degree of displeasure that confines not its expressions in evil to the direct natural results of wrong-doing. He shows himself to you maintaining his prerogative to reign by inflicting other evils in a mode of awful sovereignty. He will terminate your existence on earth by an event full of terror as being the end of life, an event which will decide either that your soul with its stupendous faculties will be blasted into annihilation--blessed with a joyous immortality, or plunged into pain, despair and horror. Such is God. All this he hath done, and this he will do. And is there nothing probable after death? Think of these things. Think of the question which death will decide in respect to yourself. A question, the mere uncertainty of whose decision is enough to convulse a universe with trembling. Is thoughtless sin then the wisest, safest, best preparation for meeting God in death? I say not what will be. I ask you only to think of what with fearful probability may be. Do you say you can meet it with composure, and

drive away the forebodings of conscious guilt? I tell you no--not if reason remains and conscience lives. Nero had not firmness of nerve enough for this. Voltaire, with his settled deadly hate of Christianity, could not do it. There is a God. He hath given a law. That law to the guilty mind will bespeak a Judge. The throne of heaven to the eye of conscience will be filled with a living, reigning, sin-avenging God.

LECTURE III: God's administration is equitable.

Second leading proposition. -- God's administration is equitable -- proved by showing, 1. That God has given the best law, 2. That he distributes good and evil equitably. -- In opposition to this proposition, the unequal distribution of good and evil has caused the chief difficulty. -- Various theories resorted to. Is the difficulty real? -- (a) Greater difficulties in denying God's equity than in admitting it. -- (b) No proof against it; for God is not inequitable in treating men better than they deserve, nor in treating them worse. More rational to regard this distribution as explicable in some unknown way. God may be administering a moral government under a gracious economy. -- (c) There is satisfactory proof for his equity -- the arguments probable and cumulative.

IN support of our leading proposition,--THAT GOD IS ADMINISTERING A PERFECT MORAL GOVERNMENT OVER MEN, I have attempted to show, that he is administering a moral government, as a peculiar kind of government, and in some proper import of the language. I now proceed, as I proposed, to show. The equity of his administration.

For this purpose it is necessary only to Show --

1. That God has given to men the best law;
2. That in the distribution of good and evil in this world, he does not show himself as departing from, but by this means and others, as adhering to

the principles of exact equity.

I remark then:

1. That God has given to men the best law. What I maintain on this topic is, that the law of benevolence, or the law of benevolent action is the best law; and that God has given this law to men. After what has been said in previous lectures, I deem it sufficient to add, that men, as moral beings, know that they are under the law which requires them to prefer the highest happiness of all--of God and his sentient creation--to every object in competition with it, and so to will, purpose, or intend at all times, and in all circumstances, to do the greatest good in their power.

2. God, in the distribution of good and evil in this world, does not show himself as departing from, but by this means and others, as adhering to the principles of exact equity.

If a moral governor gives the best law, and also does, or shows himself determined to do those things which are necessary to manifest or express his highest approbation of obedience, and highest disapprobation of disobedience, the equity of his administration is established. He may not establish his rightful authority; he may be a selfish being, and in other ways prove himself such, yet in the case now supposed, the equity of his administration cannot be impeached.

It is not however supposed, that God manifests the highest approbation of obedience, and the highest disapprobation of disobedience in this world, in every possible way or mode of their manifestation. It is not pretended that he fully and directly expresses these feelings in the distribution of good and evil in this world, or makes it according to the principles of exact justice or perfect equity; though, as I claim, this distribution involves no violation of these principles, nothing inconsistent with a strict adherence to them. What I maintain is, that while he does not

show that he adheres to these principles merely by the distribution of good and evil, his manner of doing so, even in this world, is such, that taken in connection with other things, it fully and convincingly shows his adherence to them.

This is quite supposable. A temporary, short suspension of full and exact retribution does not necessarily involve the least departure from, or violation of, any of the principles of exact justice, nor, as the case may be, does it in the least degree obscure the fact, that a moral governor adheres to these principles in his administration. There may be good and sufficient reasons for the temporary suspension of rewards and punishments, and at the same time, full and satisfactory proofs that the principles of exact justice are not violated nor abandoned.

The unequal distribution of good and evil in this world, as it is called, has occasioned the principal difficulties on this interesting subject. It has appeared on a superficial view! of Divine Providence, to involve a plain departure from, or rather a palpable violation of, the principles of exact justice. The error lies in not regarding the system of God's moral government over men as begun or entered upon, but not yet finished--as in progress, not completed--a system, perfect in all its principles as one of influence, not yet carried out into all its issues and results. Hence, it is often represented, not only as imperfect in its present stage of progress, but as actually marred with palpable injustice in the distribution of good and evil. The righteous it is said, are often cast clown in affliction, while the wicked are crowned with prosperity.

Hence, it is naturally asked, if God sustains his authority as a perfect moral governor by adhering to the principles of strict equity in his administration, why does he distribute good and evil in this world in a manner so apparently inconsistent with these principles? This difficulty, so far as I know, has not been removed by any satisfactory explanation. Some theologians, to give plausibility to their reasonings, have resorted to the theory of a future life, in which, as they would have us believe, these violations of justice will cease, and be followed with merited rewards to the righteous, and just punishments to the wicked. This solves no difficulty; for it concedes that the principles of justice are in this world

actually violated; and how can even a single violation of justice be consistent with the perfect equity of his administration?--Others that they may avoid, rather than meet and remove the difficulty, have adopted an arbitrary and unauthorized notion of justice in God, one which represents it as neither dictated by benevolence, nor as consistent with it, and which would therefore, dishonor the throne of a usurper and a tyrant. Thus it is, that occasion has been furnished for the triumph of Infidelity in its favorite conclusion,--that the moral government of God, instead of being maintained according to the unbending principles of eternal justice, is a mere system of tenderness, which does not distinguish between right and wrong; and indulgence, which accommodates itself to all iniquity. Thus it is, I may also add, that many who take the name of Christians, to quell the disturbance and alarm which they feel when they think of Heaven's Sovereign as a God of justice and of judgment, sink all that is venerable and awful in his dominion, into the lovely and easily defied imbecility of parental fondness.

In view of the supposed difficulty arising from the manner in which God distributes good and evil in this world, it may be well to inquire, before we abandon the equity of his moral administration, whether there are not greater difficulties in denying than in admitting it, or rather, whether the difficulty which appears so formidable is not rather imaginary than real, and whether the evidence is not decisive and satisfactory, that he adheres to the most exact principles of equity, without the shadow of violation of them, in his moral government over men.

Such are my own views of the subject; and to these three topics of inquiry I shall now direct my remarks.

I propose to show in respect to the equity of God's moral administration:

In the first place, that there are greater difficulties in denying than in admitting it.

In the second place, that there is no proof against it; and In the third place, that there is satisfactory proof in support of it.

In the first place, there are greater difficulties in denying than in admitting that God adheres to the principles of equity in his moral administration. The importance and bearing of this remark are, not that it proves even if true, our present position, but that if true, it shows how extremely irrational is the confident denial of it.

God, as we have seen, has furnished unequivocal proofs of the fact that he administers a moral government over men. This fact creates a strong presumption against the supposition that he would destroy all ground of confidence in his character and of respect for his authority, by violating the principles of equity in the distribution of good and evil. The difficulty of admitting such a conclusion is great and peculiar, when we reflect that the author of this system is the omniscient, almighty and immutable Creator. That such a God should give existence to moral beings, adapting their nature to the great end of conformity to the rule of benevolent action; that he should show that rule to be the expression of his will by every part of their nature and every circumstance of their condition, so that their perfection in character and in happiness depends on conformity to that will; that he should clearly evince his purpose to dispose of their happiness as obedient or disobedient, in such a manner as to make it their true and highest interest to obey his will; that he should reveal himself as immutable in his designs--adopt a course so fitted to secure the confiding homage of his moral creation, and at the same time utterly defeat that end by palpable violations of equity, in the distribution of good and evil--to believe all this involves us in no trivial difficulties. It is to suppose that by one course of action he furnishes entirely sufficient and satisfactory evidence of the equity of his government, and yet that by another course of action he proves the utter want of equity in his administration. That an earthly ruler should fall into such inconsistency, through want of foresight or power, or from fickleness of purpose, we might believe. But to ascribe such inconsistency to God, is to suppose it to exist in a case in which the only known causes for it do not exist. If then it be difficult to believe the equity of God's moral government on

account of the apparently unequal and unjust distribution of good and evil in the world, it is more difficult in view of other undeniable facts, to believe that this government is not administered in accordance with the principles of entire equity. If to believe its equity we must reject evidence, it is not less true that to disbelieve its equity we must reject evidence more decisive. If it is irrational to believe it, it is more irrational to disbelieve it.

I remark --

In the second place, that there is no evidence from the distribution of good and evil in the world, that God does not act on the principles of strict equity in his moral administration. The only conceivable ways in which God can show the want of equity in the distribution of good and evil, are the following: either by conferring less good, inflicting more evil than is deserved, or by conferring more good or inflicting less evil than is merited; or in other words, by treating his subjects worse or better than they deserve.

I remark then --

That he evinces no want of equity by treating any of his subjects worse than they deserve. Diversified as are the moral characters of men, there is one truth too obvious and too important to be overlooked in this argument--viz., that none of the subjects of God's moral government are entitled to the least good, but as transgressors of his law deserve evil only. This remark I deem worthy of particular attention, not only on account of its bearing on the present argument, but because, if I mistake not, it has been overlooked or denied by most ethical writers. In the ablest treatises on this subject, I find it constantly assumed, not only that there are wicked men who do not receive deserved punishment in this life, which is indeed undeniable, but that there are good men who do not receive a merited reward--an assumption I must think as palpably false as can be easily imagined in the view of every mind which has any adequate conception of the divine law, and the principles of human

action. Recognizing then the undeniable fact of human guilt and the principles of merit and demerit before advanced; and remembering how much more good all who are accountable for their conduct enjoy, and how much less evil they suffer than they deserve, God's providential distribution of good and evil is exempted in one respect from the reproach of injustice. There is no deficiency of good as a reward, there is no excess of evil as a penalty. All enjoy more good and suffer less evil than they deserve. God then does not violate the principle of equity by withholding from any of his subjects merited good, nor by inflicting on any undeserved evil, i.e., by treating any of his subjects worse than they deserve.

Again; God evinces no want of equity by treating any of his subjects better than they deserve. The good conferred is far greater, and the evil inflicted on all far less than their deserts. The main point however is not decided by this fact. It is true indeed, if we assume that equity demands the execution of penalty immediately on transgression, that to treat the transgressor better than he deserves, by delaying the execution of the penalty, would be a violation of equity, which however may allow what it does not require. It allows the instant punishment of the transgressor; but it cannot be truly said to demand it in all cases. An atonement may be provided, or delay to punish maybe required for some useful purpose, some reasons of State. In respect to the present fact, viz., that God treats his subjects better than they deserve, there are two questions to be decided. One is, whether he is executing legal sanctions, or whether the good is conferred as a legal reward, and the evil inflicted as a legal penalty. The other is, whether the present, or even any execution of legal sanctions, in all conceivable cases, is necessary to and demanded by the perfect equity of his administration.

It is here important also to ascertain, on the supposition of a violation of the principles of equity in treating subjects better than they deserve, wherein such violation consists. It is conceded then, that the withholding of merited good and the infliction of deserved evil, would be a violation of the rights of the individual subject or subjects, admitting of no vindication. Could such a fact be found under the government of God, any attempt to

vindicate the equity of his administration would be vain. But to treat subjects better than their desert, is at least no violation of their rights as individuals. But if it can be clearly shown that the public good suffers by treating subjects better than they deserve, then the act is as truly one of injustice to the public, as the treatment of individuals worse than they deserve would be an act of injustice to them. In respect to these two modes, there is one possible and very material difference. While a moral governor cannot treat subjects worse than they deserve, without palpable injustice to them as individuals, and I may say to the public also, it is quite possible that he should treat them better than their deserts, without injustice either to them as individuals or to the public. The case is supposable, that some temporary delay in the execution of penalty after the commission of crime, should greatly subserve the public good and increase the efficacy of law. No rights of the public, or of individuals, would be interfered with or violated by it, and no injustice done to either. Nor is this all. It is also supposable that a moral governor, especially one of infinite wisdom and power, should devise and adopt some expedient by which subjects should be treated better than they deserve, or even be entirely exempted from penal evil, without a violation of the rights of the public. Such cases are credible, there being no evidence to the contrary. Why then say that it can make no difference, Whether we suppose that God, in the distribution of good and evil in this world, executes legal sanctions or not, since if he does, he violates the principles of equity, by treating subjects better than they deserve; and if he does not, he abandons them altogether and leaves his authority as a lawgiver wholly unsupported; for I readily concede, that if God does dispense good and evil in this manner, as legal sanctions, (and this is extensively maintained by theologians) he violates the principles of equity. To treat men so much better than they deserve, and this in the execution of legal sanctions, would be manifest injustice to the public. But I deny that there is the least evidence, that in the distribution of good and evil in this world, he is executing legal sanctions; and of course, that there is the least evidence furnished by it, that he is not adhering to the principles of strict equity in his moral administration.

On this position the decision of the question now before us chiefly depends.

I remark then --

That it is more rational to regard the apparently unjust distribution of good and evil as a fact incomprehensible by us, and yet in some unknown manner consistent with the equitable administration of God's moral government, than to pronounce it absolute proof of want of equity in his administration. Let it be remembered that the only possible or supposable inconsistency in the case is, that he treats his subjects better than they deserve during a very short period of their existence, even that of human life. It is not incredible that there should be much that is incomprehensible under the government of God. This is indeed no reason why we should overlook or disregard the least legitimate evidence against the equity of his government; but it is a reason why we should carefully discriminate between what is and what is not legitimate evidence. If any thing occurs under the government of God which we can pronounce an undoubted violation of the principles of equity, then we may, and ought so to do. If we knew that God treated any of the subjects of his moral government worse than they deserved, we should be authorized and required to assert the existence of injustice in his moral administration, and if we, knew that in the execution of legal sanctions, or in that punishment which he inflicted on transgressors to sustain his authority, he treated any better than they deserved, this too, as we have seen, would be a decisive manifestation of injustice to the public. But we do not know nor can we prove, that the treatment in question is in the way or form of a strictly legal procedure, and of course that it is not perfectly consistent with the equity of his administration. It is not difficult to see how or in what manner this may be. A temporary delay of punishment may be one means of more effectually securing the end of punishment. As in human governments, public trials are of great importance in giving effect to law; so in the divine, men in this world, like the criminal waiting his day of trial and execution, may be destined to meet God in judgment, and to receive a just retribution in a future state of existence. I speak here of the mere credibility of this, which is all that my argument now requires. The reasonable supposition that punishment may be delayed as a useful expedient of moral government, and that subjects should for a little season be treated better than they deserve, precludes all evidence from

such treatment against the perfect equity of God's administration.

Again; there is yet another way in which to treat subjects better than they deserve, may be consistent with the equity of God's moral government. It is a reasonable supposition that God may be administering this government under a gracious economy, or through an atonement. It does not, as facts show, lie beyond the limits of conjecture. There is no proof to the contrary. Our ignorance of the ways or means, by which God would dispense pardon to the transgressors of law consistently with his justice, is no proof that there are none. To affirm such an impossibility in respect to God, would be obvious presumption on the part of human ignorance. Nor does the fact that some heathen philosophers maintained the impossibility that a just God should forgive sin, prove that there is not sufficient evidence, under the light of nature, to authorize even the belief of the contrary. To say nothing of the prevalence of the opposite opinion evinced by expiatory sacrifices, the assertion of such an impossibility must be admitted to be false by the Christian, and wholly unauthorized by the infidel. It is not incredible then, that God in some way, or by some expedient, should, consistently with perfect justice, become placable to offending man. The fact therefore, that he treats the subjects of his government better than they deserve, furnishes no evidence that he does not administer his government on the principles of strictest equity.

That there may be no misunderstanding on this point, let me say that I do not affirm that the distribution of good and evil in this world, either is or is not consistent with the equity of God's moral administration. I affirm only the possibility of such consistency,--that there is no proof that the one is inconsistent with the other; and that, for aught we call say to the contrary, it may be consistent with it. We know not either; and as mere ignorance is not competent to make an argument, neither is it competent to make an objection. The fact, in and of itself, is no evidence for or against the equity of God's moral administration. We are thus turned back to what we know, and have proved, to those facts which we have already established. These, as I now claim, and proceed to show--

In the third place, furnish satisfactory proof that God adheres to the principles of equity in his moral administration. To estimate justly the force of our present arguments, let it be kept in mind, that there is no evidence against the truth of our position,--that there is not, in the entire providence of God, the least departure from the principles of exact justice, in his moral administration. The question then is, whether there are any facts, which in such a case furnish legitimate and satisfactory proof that he does adhere to these principles. This is what I now claim. To illustrate the nature and the force of this argument, let us recur again to our example. A skillful artificer has begun to make a watch:--so much of the machinery falls under our observation, and we know so well its essential parts, that we can be at no loss in respect to the object of its construction. He has entire ability to finish, and to give it that perfection, as a whole, which shall correspond with the absolute perfection of all the parts which we have seen. There is no reason to believe that he will not finish what he has begun, while from his known decision of purpose and vigor in execution, as well as from the actual progress of the work, there is every reason to believe that he will. I ask now, is it rational, or is it not, to believe that the watchmaker will complete his work? Will he omit to insert the mainspring, or any other essential or important part of the machine? No one can doubt, or think of doubting.

Such then, is the argument now to be presented for the equity of God's moral government over men. I shall offer it only in a general form, intending to consider it more particularly hereafter.

God then, has in fact established a moral government over men, and actually entered on its administration. He has shown his great design to administer such a government over them by the constitution of their nature, and all the circumstances of their condition. He has given them a law or rule of action, not less clearly than had it come forth with a living voice from his throne. In this fact, and in all the modes of his providence he shows himself as assuming the right to reign over men as a lawgiver; and maintains that right by also showing that he has their happiness entirely at his own disposal, and will in fact dispose of it, as they obey or disobey his will, so as to make it for their true and highest interest to

obey. He thus clearly reveals himself as their sovereign, claiming submission in the way of supreme prerogative, and reigning in the exercise of absolute authority. His administration is in no respect marred by the slightest act of injustice. Nothing has transpired to prevent God, the next moment, and with the ease of omnipotence, from revealing himself in the glories and terrors of exact justice. Will he ever do this? Will he, or will he not, after this short and momentary life, give this perfection to that system of moral government which he has begun? Has he departed from the principles of perfect justice in dispensing good and evil to his accountable subjects? Never. Will he ever depart from these principles? Will he consent, that this moral system shall want the strength, dignity and glory which these principles alone can give it, and terminate in failure, dishonor and mockery? Will not a system of jurisprudence begun by heaven's Sovereign, and carried forward, not only without injustice, but with every indication of exact justice which the present stage of its progress, so far as we can say, admits, be carried out to a full and perfect consummation in the issues of perfect righteousness? I say not here what these issues will be--I decide not whether man's probation will or will not be prolonged after death; whether a merely legal economy will or will not be followed by a just retribution to all, nor whether the final results will or will not be those of a gracious economy. But I ask, whether the results will not show that God is now, and ever has been administering his moral government over men on the principles of perfect equity? The grand question is, what idea shall we form of God as the governor of his moral creation? It becomes us to fix on some view of God in this relation that shall be definite, intelligible, rational, and on which we can rely. Is the throne of God then sustained only by the arm of his power, threatening us with the terrors of omnipotent despotism? Has it no other basis than the sensitiveness and imbecility of paternal fondness and indulgence? Or does it stand in its true grandeur on the pillars of eternal justice? The first I concede is palpably inconsistent with the abundance and benignity of his gifts, as well as too appalling to be admitted even by those whose principles lead to such a conclusion. If now we adopt that view of God which represents him as too indulgent to adhere to the unbending principles of exact justice, then what is to be done with certain stubborn matters of fact? Why has God so obviously assumed the high prerogative of moral dominion over men? Why has he given them a law absolutely perfect in precept and unbending in its claims? Why in the very nature, adaptation

and tendencies of all things within and without us, has he shown that there is absolutely no sure and infallible way to avoid complete misery and obtain perfect happiness, but by obedience to his law? Why does he compel men to know and feel, notwithstanding all their wishes to the contrary, that whatever may be the issues of his government, they will be at least above all contempt,--such as accord with the attributes of an infinite Being, and enthrone him, if not in the confidence and affections, at least in the homage and awe of his intelligent creation? Why is it that he places himself before man so constantly in all the majesty and terrors of absolute and august sovereignty by the calamities, woes, and death of his sentient creation--afflicting, agonizing the work of his own hands, and yet never swerving from the principles of perfect justice? Is this fiction, or is it fact? Is all this nothing but the overflowings of sentimental tenderness; or are these the results of God's displeasure for man's wickedness, telling us what perfect justice can, and with fearful probability will, do in some future hour of full retribution? Death--that heaviest thunderbolt of God's wrath that ever falls on this groaning creation--what is death? What is it? what will it do with that frail imagination of yours that God is all tenderness? Look over these terrors of God and say are they to lead us to suppose ourselves the mere "nurslings Of his fondness," instead of the subjects of his righteous and holy dominion? Is all this only to make us light-hearted when death comes to look at us in earnest? Is all this designed only to lead us to make merry around the death-bed of others or on our own, or to amuse ourselves with trifles when we or others are falling into the hands of the living God? No. The fear of God as a righteous lawgiver and judge, is no superstitious fear. God does not reveal himself to us throned in the soft and smiling radiance of an indulgent deity, caring more for our happiness than for our moral conduct. He does not show himself diffusing only bliss over this world without respect to the doings of those who dwell on it. If he shows himself deserving any thing, it is to make man good that he may be happy; if he shows approbation, it is of virtue; if disapprobation, it is of vice; if he shows himself immutable in any thing, it is in his approval of the one and in his disapproval of the other. In a word, if God shows himself as aiming at any thing, designing any thing in his government of this world, it is to maintain the perfect equity of his moral administration. What he has so obviously begun in the assumption of this high prerogative, in giving his perfect law to his moral creatures, and in this whole economy of legislation, he will finish. It is his great design. To this

all things else are manifestly subservient. It is the all in all of God, our maker, to enthrone himself amid the grandeurs of eternity, the righteous moral governor of his moral creation. Death will not arrest the progress of this design, nor defeat its consummation. It will only disclose the actual results of principles already manifest--only draw aside the curtain that now faintly conceals the full effulgence of God, within that high and inviolable sanctuary, where justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne forever.

LECTURE IV: The possibility of a future state precludes all objections against the Divine equity.

Second leading proposition continued, viz. -- God administers an equitable moral government. The possibility of a future state precludes all objections against the Divine equity. -- No presumption against a future state. -- No proof the soul is material. -- No evidence that death destroys the soul -- Direct proofs of a future state. Kind of evidence furnished. -- No cause known which can destroy the soul. -- Every thing which has begun continues to exist. -- The present state unsuitable to the natural perfection of man. -- Argument from man's moral nature decisive.

IN the last lecture I attempted to show that God administers an equitable moral government over men.

In considering the argument against this position, derived from the distribution of good and evil in this world, I endeavored to show, that the only fact which can be supposed to furnish the least evidence against the equity of his administration, viz., that he treats men better than they deserve during this short and comparatively momentary state of existence, furnished not the shadow of such evidence. This fact I claimed, on the supposition of a future state, may answer some highly useful and necessary purpose, and that if we suppose even a strictly legal economy, it may, like the temporary delay to punish offenders against human governments, subserve the very ends of public justice;

that it cannot therefore, be alleged as in the least degree inconsistent with the exact equity of his moral administration, or as involving any departure from, or violation of, the principles of exact equity. Hence it was claimed, that God might at any moment show, that in entire consistency with all his doings, he has ever adhered and that he ever will adhere to these principles, and that he might do this in either of two ways--either by inflicting a full and merited retribution on all, or by showing that he administers his government under a gracious economy. Having thus shown that there is not the slightest evidence against, I presented the direct, evidence for, the equity of his moral government. I showed that he is actually administering a moral government--that to administer such a government over men is manifestly his great design, one to which his works of creation and providence are obviously subservient; a design which stands forth first, greatest, brightest of all; that he has manifested his equity by giving to men the best law--the only law which a being of perfect justice would or could give; that he is able to administer his government in perfect equity, and that he has, so to speak, scrupulously avoided treating any of his subjects worse than they deserve, while in treating them better, he has not furnished the least reason to doubt his equity. With these things in view, it was claimed that we are shut up to one of these conclusions, either that this chief design of the Infinite Being will fail in defeat and mockery, which is utterly incredible; or that he ever has been, and is still adhering, and ever will adhere to the principles of justice in his moral administration.

Thus the supposition or the bare possibility of a future state is sufficient to neutralize every objection to the equity of God's moral administration. It leaves in its full and unimpaired force the evidence for its equity, which uncounteracted by opposing evidence is abundant and decisive. Nor is this all. The possibility of a future state in connection with such evidence for the equity of his administration, reveals the certainty by revealing the necessity of a future state, that God may finish what he has begun, and what as an omniscient, almighty and immutable being he must finish. We say then not only that there may be, there will be (for there must be) a future state, in which God will unfold by the requisite issues the perfect equity of his moral government over men. What else can be supposed or thought of? What otherwise will become of the great, the most obvious

design of God in the creation and government of this world? Shall we suppose such a design abandoned? Is Omniscience at fault in the plan; is Omnipotence discomfited in the execution; are infinite attributes thwarted of an end worthy of such attributes; in place of reality is there pretense and pageantry, instead of majesty and glory is there the self-degradation of an Infinite Being? What shall we say? Plainly without a future state of being for man, the works and ways of God present the most insolvable of all problems--the most intractable of all enigmas, His designs, his doings, his character, what he is, what we his creatures are, and what we are to be--all this entire moral system is but a feverish dream of uncertainty, agitation and pain--a chaos of darkness and terror while the mere supposition of a future state is like the word of the Creator, when in respect to this material system he said, "Let there be light, and there was light." As a mere supposition, while it at once reveals its own reality, it pours the effulgence of noonday on all the works of creation and providence, and shows God as the righteous moral governor of his moral creation, reigning to display the harmony, grandeur and glory of his perfect dominion.

The necessity of a future state in order that God may accomplish what he has so obviously begun, is decisive as an argument, and it is not my design to dwell longer upon this particular mode of reasoning. Indeed to see the great facts of creation and providence which disclose so clearly the chief design of God in respect to man, is also to see the necessity and reality of a future state in which by its requisite issues the equity of God's moral government over this world will be unfolded. I will only add on this topic, that if called upon to engage in controversy with one who denied a future state, I should place my chief reliance on this argument, and feel strong for the contest.

The question however of a future state has been controverted so much on other grounds, and has been supposed to involve no many difficulties, that to examine these modes of reasoning may serve to strengthen an argument in some minds, if any additional strength is needed. In this mode of argument, then I proceed to show that-

There is a future state of existence for man.

I propose to show as briefly as may be:

In the first place, that there is not even a presumption against the fact;
and

In the second place, to offer direct proofs of the fact of a future state.

In the first place, there is not even a presumption against the fact.

Some philosophers have maintained that the soul is a material substance, or that its existence depends on our bodily organization, and hence have denied its immortality. That the soul is material, or that its existence depends on any organization of matter, is in my view wholly a gratuitous and unauthorized assumption.

Its immateriality however I do not consider as a fact of any importance on the question of its immortality. The only use which seems to be made of it, is to refute an objection against the possibility of the soul's future existence. It can however in no respect answer even this purpose, since the annihilation of the soul or its continued existence is equally possible to the Creator, whether it be material or immaterial. It must be admitted that the soul may have a future existence whether it be a material or a spiritual substance.

Again; there is no evidence that death destroys the soul. I am not saying that death does not produce this effect, but simply that there is no evidence that it does produce it. We know to some extent the actual effects of death, but we cannot say that the destruction of the soul is one of them. We do not know on what the continued existence of the soul and of its powers proximately depends. We do not therefore know enough of death to say whether it will or will not destroy the soul. Its existence with all its powers in perfect exercise, may depend on that which death cannot

touch. There is indeed an intimate connection in many respects between the soul and the body. But we have no such knowledge of the nature and mode of this connection, as to authorize us to decide that the soul cannot exist without the body, and even in a more perfect state. Should this be proved hereafter, it would not contradict or be inconsistent with any fact of our present knowledge. Death indeed removes the souls of others from our view. It drops its dark curtain over the future, but it tells us nothing of its doings or its effects beyond death. The nature of things then reveals no certain connection between death and the destruction of the soul.

Again; there is no evidence from any known phenomena against the future existence of the soul. It is from this source that the most forcible objections against our doctrine and the most Plausible arguments for the opposite opinion are derived. What then are the phenomena--what are the facts? This is the question which must be answered with precision. All that can be pretended is, that certain states of the body, those of disease, of intoxication, of old age, obviously impair the mental faculties, and, as the case may be, suspend or remove all visible evidence of their existence, while death puts an utter end to it.

To the question, then--do these facts furnish the slightest evidence that the soul ceases to exist at death?

I answer--

All the facts now referred to may be Comprised in these two impaired faculties, and the suspension or final cessation of all visible evidence of their existence.

And first, let us look carefully at the supposed evidence from impaired faculties. That some diseases, and that old age often impair the faculties of the mind, cannot be doubted. But many do not produce this effect; and

in some cases, disease actually destroys life, and leaves the mind, even to the last, in the vigor and activity of perfect health. This fact shows that the mind is not so dependent on the state of the body as necessarily to languish and die under the very causes that destroy the body. It shows more, that there is not the slightest reason for supposing that disease destroys the existence of powers, which, even in its progress, it often leaves wholly unimpaired till death. There are similar exceptions in regard to the influence of age. Generally, indeed, as bodily health and vigor decay, the mental faculties decline. If there are no decisive exceptions to this fact, still there is nothing sufficient to show that the existence of the mind necessarily depends on the life of the body. Indeed, the influence of some diseases, and of old age to impair mental vigor, is in no respect inconsistent with the supposition, that the body, in some particular states, is a mere encumbrance to the mind, and produces effects which would wholly cease by their separation; so that the mind, being wholly disconnected with the body, would possess greater vigor, and awake to new and hitherto unknown activity. Here we must not confound one cause with another; we must not consider disease as terminating in death, but disease, as such, producing its own proper and known effects on the mind. Suppose then, (although there are many decisive exceptions to the fact) that disease always, during its continuance, impairs or deranges the powers of the mind. Yet, does it destroy them? In far the greatest number of cases, when the cause is removed, does not the effect cease; or rather, does not the cause often cease, without the destruction of the mind as its consequent? Does the impairing of mental powers necessarily involve their destruction? Do you see and know any other effect of disease but the former, and this merely temporary? Does one effect involve the other? You might as well say, that because a blow on the head produces a momentary derangement of the mental faculties, it actually lands the soul in annihilation.

Do you say, that it is not meant that disease as such ever destroys the mind? Why then is it so often asserted? If the meaning be, that disease weakens the faculties in many cases with greater or less rapidity, and terminates in death as its proximate effect, be it so; but this is only specifying another result of disease, viz., death. Take their all its effects. If the result of disease, in mental imbecility, does not show the soul's

annihilation, does death prove it to our observation or our knowledge?

This brings us to the other fact, viz., the cessation of all visible evidence of the soul's existence. This is admitted; and be it remembered, it is all that can be claimed. But does the cessation of the visible evidence of the soul's existence prove that it has actually ceased to exist? The want of evidence of the existence of a thing is surely no proof of its non-existence. In some cases, as that of drowning when followed by resuscitation, the evidence of the existence of an intelligent agent wholly ceases from our observation. But who infers the destruction of the agent? I do not say, that the cessation of evidence of his existence proves that he did not cease to exist; this is proved by resuscitation; but that the cessation of the evidence of existence does not prove that he did cease to exist. I am willing to concede that it shows the suspension of the intellectual operations, but it does not prove the non-existence of the agent.

Between this case and that of death, there is indeed one important difference. In the event of death, the evidence that there is a mere suspension of the mental operations, or rather the evidence that the agent continued to exist furnished by resuscitation, is wholly wanting. We cannot say that the agent has not, nor can we say that he has ceased to exist. The event of death proves nothing, and, in itself considered, authorizes no belief. And if, as we have seen, the cessation of the visible evidence of continued existence is perfectly consistent with the fact of its continuance, as in the case of apparent drowning, then, in the event of death, this evidence may, entirely cease, and yet resuscitation may follow.

I admit another fact often appealed to in this argument; viz., that death destroys what other causes of the suspension of the mental powers do not affect, viz., the organs of sensation and all the functions of animal life. But we have the most decisive proof that the continuance and activity of the mental powers do not depend on the continuance of the bodily organs. Even those ideas which are derived through these organs may be as vivid when they are not, as when they are the media of reception. Of this the phenomena of dreams are decisive. If the mind without the

organs of sensation can recall the ideas of sensation without their objects, a fortiori it can form ideas of sensation without the organs and their objects; so that death destroys the powers of sensation and still less those of reflection, no evidence can be adduced. To infer that it does from the mere want of evidence that it does not, is as truly unphilosophical, as to infer that sound sleep is a state of annihilation.

If it here be said that the cases are materially different, since in one we have the evidence of continued existence from subsequent phenomena, I readily admit it. But then these show that the conclusion of non-existence is not authorized by the suspension of visible intellectual operations, so all that can be said in a case in which such subsequent phenomena do not exist is, that there is no evidence of continued existence, and not that there is evidence of non-existence.

If it be further said that as there is no evidence of continued existence after death, either in the event itself or in any subsequent phenomena, it is irrational to believe in such existence, I most readily admit it, so far as death and its subsequent phenomena can be supposed to furnish evidence. We are not authorized to believe in the future existence of the soul on this ground merely, nor be it remembered, are we authorized to disbelieve it. When there is no evidence there should be no faith, and no faith should not be confounded with believing. If the event of death authorizes no faith on the question whether the soul will exist after death, then it does not authorize the belief that it does not exist. The event of death then, and all its attendant and consequent phenomena, are to be laid aside as having no bearing on the question before us. Provided there is no other source of evidence, we are bound to believe nothing respecting the future existence of the soul.

Laying aside then the event of death as having no bearing on the question under consideration, I proceed,

In the second place to offer direct proofs of a future state.

Before I adduce the proposed proofs, I would make a remark or two respecting the nature or kind of evidence to be offered. It is not pretended then, that it is of that kind which excludes the possibility in the nature of things of the truth of the opposite proposition. The evidence is of that kind which logicians call probable or moral, as distinguished from demonstrative, evidence which in a thousand cases to one, controls the practical faith of men, and must control it, or they must act the part of idiots or madmen. Nor are there any arguments either in natural or revealed theology which are in the strict sense demonstrative, that is, the opposites of which involve known contradiction. This remark is of more importance in relation to the present subject than to many other cases. The bare possibility, the mere may be that death is the end of our existence, is peculiarly apt to prevent or weaken the force of the existing evidence to the contrary. Now let it be remembered that a may be is not an argument. There is a may be, that you will never leave this room alive; it may be, that when you take food the next time it will produce strangulation and death, and to give no other example, it may be that if you reason yourself into the belief of either of these things, or that death is the end of man, you will reason falsely. How exceedingly irrational it is to reject moral evidence, and especially when it consists of an accumulation of probabilities on one side of a question, merely because there is a possibility of the truth of an opposite conclusion, all men see and feel in the ordinary business of human life. They know that on this principle they could not act nor even subsist. God has made the human mind to be influenced by moral evidence in assenting to truth as really as in assenting to truth in the form of intuition. It might perhaps be said, that it was designedly so because it is necessary to moral beings in a state of moral discipline. Be it so or not, the philosopher who reasons and concludes in morals or theology with an argument no better than may be, ought to be eulogized at most as a may be philosopher.

To proceed now with the direct proofs of a future state,

I remark --

That there is no cause known which will destroy the existence of the soul. It is reasonable to believe that things will continue as they have done in our experience, unless there be some cause known to us that will produce a change. This is the kind of evidence or rather of reasoning on which we rely, and on which the mind is made to rest its belief in cases innumerable. For example, how confidently we believe on this ground, simply that the sun will rise and set to-morrow, and that our lives will be prolonged for some time to come. So powerful is the influence of this kind of evidence, that when it accords with our wishes as it does in respect to the continuance of our present life, it is often unimpaired by high degrees of opposing evidence. Without however attempting to measure the degree of faith which is authorized by this kind of evidence, it is undeniable that such a degree as to make it practical in regard to the business of life is not only authorized but required. But if we have sufficient to justify or require any degree of faith, that the life of the body will be continued another year or even another day, we have much more to justify the belief that the soul will exist after death and forever. The evidence from past experience simply considered, may justly be viewed as the same in both cases. But in respect to the life of the body, we know that there are many causes of its destruction, some one of which may terminate it at any hour or moment; while in respect to the life of the soul, we know of none that ever did or ever will terminate it. I need not say how strong would be our belief in the continued endless life of the body, if we knew no cause of its termination. How firm then according to the same principle, ought to be our faith in the endless life of the soul.

The principle of belief now referred to in connection with the known immateriality of the soul, is that on which primarily rests the universal belief of mankind in a future existence. Nor can the soundness of the principle, nor the reasonableness of the faith be questioned. When has man known any thing to cease to be, without a cause? Why then, in this case, should we believe, that what has been, and now is, will not continue to be; while we neither know, nor have the least reason to believe, that there is any cause that will prevent its continued existence?

Again; every thing within our observation, which has begun, continues to

exist; it is therefore reasonable to believe that the soul will do so. The body indeed seems to perish; but we know, that while it decays, it does not actually and truly perish. From the creation of the visible universe to the present moment, we have not the slightest reason to believe that one atom of it all has ceased to be. What we term decay and death in the animal and vegetable kingdoms is not annihilation, but only a change of parts and relations, and a name for another form of continued existence. If then every particle of matter, even of our own bodies, to which God has given existence, continues to exist, is it philosophical to disbelieve, or even to doubt the continued existence of the soul? If every thing else, after all that can be called decay or death, continues to exist, the rational conclusion is that the soul does also. The dust, so to speak, returns to the dust as it was and yet it is carefully preserved; why then does not the spirit ascend to God who gave it? Is it rational, is it philosophical to deny and overlook such analogies? Where had been the discoveries of Newton, had he disregarded them? Where had been all science, had men not believed that what is true of some things which they know, is also true of other things which they do not know? It belongs to him who denies or doubts the continued existence of the soul after death, to produce some positive proof of a departure from the entire analogy, of nature in respect to this agent. Thus the death of the body, the very thing from which the destruction of the soul has been inferred, becomes proof to the contrary. If death does not even destroy the body, or rather if it is only a change involving the continued existence of every particle of it, why should it destroy the soul, or rather, why not result in its continued existence? Which is the logical inference? Death is a change in which every particle of the body continues to exist, therefore the soul ceases to exist; or death is a change in which every particle of the body continues to exist, therefore, the soul continues to exist. In the one case, the premises and conclusion have no conceivable connection. In the other, they have the same that led Newton to believe that the same law of gravity which pertained to a falling apple, controls the motions of every planet. Even if the mind is matter, why is it that not a single atom of unthinking matter is destroyed, and every atom of thinking matter must be annihilated? Why is it that the almighty Preserver of one should so carefully take care of its every, particle, and yet so carefully and scrupulously annihilate the other? Is this the doctrine of reason, of philosophy? True, we admit the possibility of its destruction by the Creator. But must not some reason be found, some motive discovered for

the exclusive annihilation of that which we call mind, of that which gives all its value and worth to the creatures of his power? Why should the Creator of man preserve every thing in his creature which is strictly corporeal and comparatively worthless, and destroy every thing that is mental and meet for immortality; why preserve every thing that likens man to the dust beneath his feet, and destroy all that constitutes the image of Himself? Would the father of a child do this? Would the maker of a watch act on such a principle? Well may we ask philosophy, if man's resemblance to his Maker is only the reason for blasting his creation into annihilation.

Further, I argue the doctrine of a future state from the obvious unsuitableness of the present to the perfection of the nature of man. In the material world, the more our knowledge extends, the more of order and of system, of design and of adaptation appears in all that we behold, until the conviction is forced upon us that the Maker of all forms no abortive purposes. If we look at the nature and condition of animals, we find a striking coincidence between them, their condition being so accommodated to their instincts and their powers, that the obvious design of their being may be fully attained in this world. Hence it is, that while if we had nothing to reason from but their past life with our ignorance of their utter destruction by death, we should rationally infer their future existence; yet in view of the obvious adaptation of their nature to their present condition, and of the fact that the end of their existence is here fully attained, it is irrational to believe that they continue to exist after death. Not so however in respect to man. If man's being terminates with his life, then does his present existence present the most inscrutable of all mysteries, the most insolvable enigma to be found in all the works, of God. We can tell with more or less confidence, for what all things else are created, but to decide what is the end of that creature of God for whom every thing else is made, that being who bears the likeness of his Creator, defies and baffles all philosophy. Our Maker, who delights to unfold his wisdom and his power to our inspection in the manifestation of the adaptations, objects and ends of all his other works, even in the structure of an insect, conceals the design of the greatest of them all in utter darkness; or rather what is far more inexplicable, he shows that the most exalted design is under an absolute necessity of utter failure and

defeat. Nor is this all. He exhibits himself in the decisive character of a deceiver, obliging us to regard adaptations and tendencies as no evidence of plan and of the actual results of his works. He thus unsettles all our principles of reasonings from these sources, and whether such facts give us annihilation or immortality, our conclusion has no claim to confidence. This is too unphilosophical for our opponents to believe. What then is the Creator's great design in giving existence to such a creature as man? If we consider his intellectual faculties, the foundation laid in his constitution for unlimited improvement, the wide range for acquisition opened through the immensity of space and duration; what is man qualified to become, or rather what is he not qualified to become compared with any thing he is during this momentary life? Is it credible that God has thus fitted the human mind for progress, furnished it with so beautiful an arrangement of faculties for every kind of acquisition, and incited it by an impulse that ceaselessly awakens it to the pursuit--so formed it, that by every effort it becomes stronger and more eager for, further attainments, that when this mind has been thus qualified, disciplined, and prepared to go on to perfection, the very improvement it has made should become a reason for arresting its progress in annihilation? Are we to believe that He who made man what he is, will destroy his own work, merely because if permitted to live, he would accomplish the high end for which he made him?

The argument from the moral nature of man is made still more impressive by the superiority of its design and object. If there is no existence for man beyond the present state, what can we suppose to be the design of his Creator in forming him a moral being? What powers, what capacities are involved in his nature! What capacity to enjoy, and what power to impart happiness to others! Who can reflect on the nature of such a creature, his intelligence, his susceptibility, his will, his conscience, the dignity, the excellence of which he is capable, the moral victories and triumphs he may win, his fitness to hold on his way with archangels, strong in advancing all that good which infinite wisdom could devise and infinite benevolence could love, the graces with which he may be adorned, and the beatitudes with which he may be blessed, and not believe that he is made to be one with the God who created him--a partaker of his blessedness, a companion of his eternity?

If we consider what an almost total failure there is, even on the part of every good man, to attain in any respect the great end of his creation; how weak in resolution and feeble in heart how little success in subduing his passions and governing his temper--how much of life is spent before he even begins to live in obedience to the demands of duty and of conscience how remote he is from the uniform and settled tranquillity of perfect virtue--what dissatisfaction he feels with the present, unappeased by all the world can offer--what an impatience and disgust with the littleness of all he finds--what an ever restless aspiration after nobler and higher things--what anticipations and hopes from futurity, never realized here on earth how does our spirit labor under a sense of the incongruity between his attainments and his powers; and unless there is a future state, what an insignificance is imparted to all that can be called virtue here on earth, and also to man himself.

What too shall we say of all those proofs of the power, the wisdom, the goodness of the great Author of all things, which are presented to us in all his works, and the satisfaction there is in knowing and contemplating such a Being? To what purpose are we rendered capable of elevating our thoughts to him, if we are never to learn any more of his character than we know in this short life? For what object has he given proofs of his overruling power and providence, and excited man to look to him with submission, confidence, and affection, if man has no interests to be cared for but those of a day? Why, in a word, has he made those manifestations of his Godhead, and of those relations to man, and of man to himself, which constitute the basis of all that we call religion, if all these are to cease at death? I do not say it would be absolutely worthless even then, but it would sink to comparative insignificance. It would be the religion of a being who has no God but for the brief moment of this mortal life--the love, the hopes, the confidence of an insect of an hour, instead of the religion of an immortal, trusting in God for the gifts of his goodness through a coming eternity.

Indeed, nothing is more obvious to reason, than that life to man would be but a short series of animal sensations, and death only the changing of

the relation of a few particles of matter. To live as he would, and as well as he might, were death the end of him, would at the same time be a perversion of powers an outrage on nature, unmatched in the works of God. The true and proper business of life would be changed. All that could be called the end of his existence would become scarcely worthy of a thought; and, as a being of a day, he would sink to an insignificance which would render the course he pursued through the world, a concern too trivial for consideration. Why then are those powers given to man, which fit him to rise to such an inconceivable height in the scale of being, without a motive to aspire to such elevation, or the possibility of attaining it? Why this destiny to self-degradation? In all his other works nothing is waste, nothing is useless. Every organ, appetite, faculty, hope and desire, in every creature has its counterpart object. Man is an exception to this absolute universality. For his moral nature, for that part of man which alone gives value to existence with its high capacities and aspirations, the universe presents no objects of corresponding worth and greatness. Or rather, viewed in relation to man's moral nature, every thing is great. The material universe around him, the total sum of human existence, the events that happen on our globe are great. All the analogies, tendencies and relations everywhere conspicuous, are great, and manifest great designs and results. This material system bespeaks a corresponding moral system which is great, and furnishes unquestionable intimations of a vast scheme whose disclosures will be great. The moral system as here developed is great in its authority, its law, in all its tendencies, and actual results. God is great. Man is great. His nature bespeaks the dignity of an immortal, and looks onward to the grandeurs of eternity. Eternity is great. And yet man, for whom all this greatness exists--placed amid it all, and next in greatness to his God--man, made, designed, and fitted for eternity, exists but a moment!! Is it credible? Is it not a violence to the harmonies of creation, a defeat and failure of God's designs, that no rational man can believe? Is it not giving a contemptible insignificance to the very image of God in his own creatures? Is it not reflecting most severely and dishonorably on the wisdom and the power that gives them existence? No human mind, with these views of God and of man, can rest in such a conclusion. Shall a God of infinite natural perfection form myriads of beings so much in his own image, and doom their powers to uselessness and waste while they live, and the beings themselves to an instant annihilation? It were a farce in creation; the infinite God sporting in the exercise, and with the products

of his infinite attributes. No. Man is made for a higher purpose than can be answered by this short life; and that this purpose may be accomplished, he will never cease to be.

Thus I have attempted to show, that while there is not the shadow of evidence against a future state, there are, entirely aside from the moral government of God, many considerations, which, especially when combined, give a high degree of probability of such a state.

The argument then for the equity of God's moral government over men, as we have presented it, stands thus: the argument, from the fact that God has given men the best law, and from the manner in which he distributes good and evil in this world, with other considerations, is in its nature decisive, provided there is no proof to the contrary. The mere supposition of a future state removes every particle of pretended evidence against the equity of this administration; while with the possibility of a future state, the necessity of it, that God may complete that equitable system of moral government which he has obviously begun, places the fact of such a state beyond all rational doubt, or rather forces it on human belief. In addition to these things, we have shown, that aside from the fact of God's moral government, and on other grounds, there is also a high probability of a future state. Our conclusion then is, that there is a future state, in which God can, and therefore will, unfold the equity of his moral administration over men; in other words, God is administering an equitable moral government.

LECTURE V: God administers his moral government under a gracious economy.

Second leading proposition continued, viz.: God administers an equitable moral government God administers his moral government under a gracious economy. -- Explanation. -- Proof 1. The manner in which he administers. good and evil harmonizes with such an economy. -- 2. Distribution of good and evil proves a design to recover. -- (a) A virtuous life the happiest. -- (b) Gifts of God tend to gratitude. -- (c) Natural evils

prove the same design. -- (d) The present a state of discipline -- (e) The happiness of man in his own power. -- (f) Without forgiveness, reclaiming influences vain. God's favor can be secured only on the terms which Christianity prescribes, whether Christianity is or is not from God.

It has been extensively maintained by the advocates of revelation, that it is the exclusive honor of Christianity, not merely that it reveals THE MODE of God's favor to the guilty, but that we are also indebted to it for the belief of even the possibility of his favor. How far the human mind, uninstructed by a divine revelation, would in fact have pushed its inquiries on this interesting subject, is one question; how far it could have done this, is another. The probability is, that the conclusions of the human mind would in fact have been in a high degree doubtful and unsatisfactory, if not against the doctrine of the divine placability. This however might easily be traced to other causes than the want of sufficient evidence of such placability. The aversion of man to the knowledge of God would be a sufficient cause both of imperfect investigations and false conclusions; Christianity may have suggested truths or principles, which would not, though they could, have been discovered without it; and in this way at least we may be able to prove the placability of, God, without assuming any of the declarations of Christianity as of divine authority. The demonstration of a problem in geometry is not less independent of Euclid's authority, because he first suggested the constructions on which the demonstration depends.

Nor is there any dishonor done to Christianity by maintaining the sufficiency of human reason to make this discovery; but rather the magnitude of the gift, and the grace that conferred it, are greatly diminished on the contrary supposition.

To Christianity, we may still be indebted for our conclusion, in point of fact, though not of necessity. For although the doctrine of the divine placability might be traced by the light of reason, this by no means shows that revelation was not, in one sense, necessary to the actual knowledge

or belief of the doctrine. It only shows the ground of that necessity to be, not the want of evidence in the works and providence of God, nor of incapacity in the human mind to discover it, but the perverseness and criminal blindness of the mind itself. And surely the kindness of a benefactor, who secures the actual vision of those who willfully shut their own eyes, is not less conspicuous than that of one who first brings upon them the constitutional calamity of blindness, and afterward removes it. On this principle, we see not only the grace and mercy of God manifested in the most illustrious manner, in giving a revelation to men; for it is a gift to the guilty, made necessary by their own perverseness'. On the other, though it may indeed be a gift of goodness, it cannot be a gift of mercy, there being no obligation to believe without it. Nor is this all. On the supposition that the providence of God clearly evinces his placability to guilty, man, we have a double testimony to the truth of the revealed declaration, that God is reconciling the world to himself. We see the ways of God, his acts and his doings, to be coincident with his declarations; while on the other supposition, there is palpable contradiction between what he does and what he says. How is the stamp of divinity impressed on God's revelation by such a coincidence.

It is not true however, that all the advocates of Christianity have denied that the divine placability can be discovered from the light of nature. President Edwards, speaking of the outward provision which God makes for the temporal well-being of man, says, "that it is a great argument, that God is not an implacable enemy of mankind, in a settled determination finally to east them off, and never again to admit them to favor."-MISCEL. OBSERVATIONS.

The Apostle also, (HEB. ii. 7) has laid down a general principle, which must be decisive on this point with the believer in his authority. "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." He also declares, that men, having not a revelation from God, are without excuse for not glorifying him as God. (Rom. i. 20.) It is not impossible then that the heathen should come to God, or that they should glorify him as God; and of course it is not impossible that they should believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder

of them that diligently seek him. There is evidence then furnished by the light of nature, that God is a rewarder. True it may be, that I may not be able to exhibit this evidence as it actually exists. That it does exist, admits of no doubt, if the Scriptures be true. With the full persuasion of the fact that such evidence does exist, the propriety of attempting to unfold it cannot be doubted.

The argument for the equity of God's moral government, in a previous lecture, rested on two suppositions, which I proposed to show are matters of fact. This was attempted in the last two lectures in respect to the first supposition, viz., that of a future state.

It now remains to show, that

God administers his moral government over men under an economy of grace.

By this, I mean an economy under which, through an atonement, God can consistently with the perfect equity of his administration, show favor to the guilty. It will be remembered, according to the principles already advanced, that God, to evince the equity of his administration, must show the highest approbation of obedience to his law, and the highest disapprobation of disobedience. By an atonement then, I mean some expedient or provision, by which he shows as high disapprobation of transgression as he would by the punishment of transgressors. Here I admit and maintain, that it would be wholly beyond the power of the human mind to devise or discover any expedient by which this equivalent manifestation of disapprobation could be made. At the same time it is to be remembered, that man is not to limit the conceptions of the omniscient mind by those of his own. Whether man can or cannot see how, or by what means an adequate atonement can be made, it would be manifest presumption to affirm that the infinite God cannot. We must admit the possibility of the fact, and if we find good and sufficient evidence, must

believe, that though we know not the particular mode that God has devised and adopted, yet that he has some expedient by which he can reconcile the pardon of transgressors with the equity of his moral administration.

In support of the fact, that God administers his moral government under an economy of grace, I remark --

In the first place, that the manner in which God distributes good and evil in this world, entirely harmonizes with such an economy. This appears in the general fact, that in distributing good and evil in this world, he evinces no undue or inappropriate feelings toward virtue or vice. That he shows any want of a due regard to virtue, cannot be pretended, on the supposition of a gracious economy. There is no deficiency of reward no treating of virtuous subjects worse, though all are treated better than they deserve, which perfectly accords with a system of grace.

Again; God evinces no approbation or disapprobation of vice as such. Let us briefly examine the providential facts which can be supposed to bear on this point. We see that the imperfectly virtuous--and such only are the best of men--do, so far as virtue is in its nature connected with self-complacency and peace of conscience, or with any attendant or consequent happiness, reap the appropriate benefits of their imperfect virtue. These are indeed, in some degree, beyond prevention, except by the annihilation of the subject, and are therefore no evidence of God's approbation of sin in good men, even under a merely legal dispensation. Besides, were these benefits of imperfect virtue not experienced by its subjects, how could there be any evidence of God's gracious design to allure men to the practice of virtue, or to restore them to his favor? It is plain, that without them no manifestation of an economy of grace could be made; and instead of being inconsistent with such an economy, they perfectly harmonize with, and are even demanded by it.

Another fact, which may be supposed to bear on the point now before us

is, that those who are wholly vicious, even the most abandoned, experience only in a very imperfect degree the appropriate evils of vice in remorse of conscience. In this fact we see, on the part of man, an obvious counteraction of the design of God, as it is decisively manifested in the nature and tendencies of things. The fact therefore that wicked men avoid these evils by thus obviously counteracting these tendencies, is not properly and truly the effect of what God does, or fails to do, except in one respect, viz., that he does not place them in such a condition, or in such circumstances, that the full effects of vice, in remorse of conscience, will be felt. But to do so, would be to place them under the full retribution of law. Of course all indications of an economy of grace must cease, and absolute despair of the divine favor must be the consequence. This exemption then, in the case of the wicked, from the full measure of remorse of conscience, while it evinces on the part of God no approbation of vice and no want of disapprobation of it, under an economy of grace, is plainly consistent with, and required by, such an economy.

Further; the enjoyment of various other kinds of good which are not deserved, and exemption from various other kinds of evil which are deserved require consideration. I remark then, that the enjoyment of this good and the exemption from this evil are obviously the effects of those general laws whose operation and results are seen to be wholly independent of the moral character of man as marking its diversity; and that therefore they do not evince any approbation of vice, or any want of disapprobation of it, on the part of God. If we consider the enjoyments of this class possessed by the imperfectly virtuous man, we shall see that God in bestowing them evinces no approbation of his moral imperfection. For example, such a man by his skill and activity acquires wealth with its numerous advantages and comforts. But it is manifest at once that these blessings are not the appropriate effects of his moral imperfections, but of his skill and industry. To confirm this view of the subject, we see others equally virtuous, either through unskillfulness or by unavoidable providential calamities, the victims of poverty with all its evils. We are unavoidably led therefore to trace this class of enjoyments to other causes than moral character, so far as the present question is concerned. We see clearly that the providential Disposer of events does not, in the

distribution of these favors, act on the principle of expressing approbation of imperfect virtue or of vice, but that they result from the operation of those general laws, which act irrespectively of moral character. These laws and their results for aught we can see, must exist, or the appropriate indications of an economy of grace must wholly cease. For the same reason the good things enjoyed by the vicious are no expression of God's approbation of vice. We see indeed the industrious knave cultivate the soil and reap the harvest, and also the indolent, be their moral character what it may, leave it uncultivated and live in penury. Hence no one ascribes this difference in providential allotment to diversity of moral character; none regards the prosperity of the skillful and industrious villain, as an expression of God's approbation of his character, but all ascribe it to other causes whose operation and effects are wholly irrespectively of moral character. If it here be said, that under the providence of God it is the appropriate tendency of certain vices to procure enjoyments; of avarice for example to secure wealth, of ambition to acquire honor, etc. I reply that these things are not true in any respect which bears on the present subject; for we see avarice, for example, acquiring wealth only when connected with skill and industry, while we find it existing in an equal degree when attended by indolence or unskillfulness, acquiring nothing besides, it is apparent that a virtuous regard to wealth, connected with skill and industry, has a direct tendency to secure an adequate, not to say an equal, degree of wealth, and greatly to augment its enjoyments. Indeed it would be easy to show, were it necessary, that under the providence of God the amount of happiness connected with avarice, ambition and sensuality, is far less than results from the opposite virtues. The supposed tendency of these vices is not real, and the acquisition of wealth by avarice, of honor by ambition and of pleasure by sensuality, is no expression of God's approbation of these vices. These enjoyments then are to be traced to other causes--to that operation of general laws which is independent of moral character, and which is in no respect inconsistent with God's disapprobation of vice, except that he does not place men in a state of exact retribution; and therefore under an economy of grace they are in no respect inconsistent with his disapprobation. in other words, all that can be called the good consequences of vice, are the unavoidable results of those laws which necessarily pertain to an economy of grace, and therefore harmonize with and are required by such an economy.

Once more. Exemption from that class of evils in the case of the wicked, to which I have referred, is no expression of God's want of disapprobation of vice. This is sufficiently obvious from the principles already advanced. Such exemption or exact retribution is the only conceivable alternative. At least it must exist to some extent, or the system of general laws which for aught we can see is inseparable from an economy of grace must be abandoned, or man must be placed in a state of exact retribution, which would render such an economy impossible.

Thus it appears that the mode in which God distributes good and evil in this world is not inconsistent with the administration of a moral government under an economy of grace, but perfectly harmonizes with such an economy. If now we reflect on the proofs adduced in former lectures, as furnished by the nature of man and the condition in which he is placed, that God is administering a moral government over him in some form, that there is nothing in his providential dispensations at all inconsistent with his adhering to the strict principles of equity in his administration, but clear and satisfactory intimations that he does adhere to them, then we are shut up to one of these conclusions; viz., either God will execute after the short respite of human life a full and exact retribution on every individual of this sinful world; or show that he is administering his government under a gracious economy. If we reflect again on the view of the subject that has now been given, particularly on the fact, that while in all his dispensations God so scrupulously avoids any expression of feelings, which appear to be at variance with a due degree of approbation of virtue, and of disapprobation of vice, every thing in this distribution of good and evil harmonizes with an economy of grace, just as we should suppose it would. We see also a coincidence and harmony which remove all presumption against, if they do not create a presumption in favor of the conclusion, that God is administering an equitable moral government under a gracious economy.

I now proceed to offer more direct evidence on the point before us, and remark-

In the second place, that God in the distribution of good and evil clearly and decisively evinces a design to restore man to virtue and happiness.

This design of God is so conspicuous and capable of such extensive illustration and confirmation, and yet to every contemplative mind is so remote from demanding either, that I shall advert only to the leading sources of argument, and in the briefest form possible.

I observe --

(1.) That the providential dispensations of God furnish decisive proof, that in respect to worldly or physical enjoyments, a virtuous course of life is the happiest. Whatever may be the practical estimate of mankind on this question--whatever obscurity the sophistry of the passions or of the heart may throw around it, none fail to perceive and know that intemperance or excess of every kind, i.e., selfishness in all its specific forms of action, greatly impairs our comfort and our happiness on earth. In illustration and proof of the fact, I can only advert to a few obvious instances. Who does not know that honesty is the best policy? By honesty I mean not overt action merely, but that which is dictated by right moral principle. Who does not know the advantages of a virtuous compared with a vicious course of life in respect to health and all our bodily enjoyments, to the possession of wealth and the pleasures it is capable of affording--in a word, to all those blessings which we comprise under the general name of worldly prosperity? Here also might be considered the favor, kindness, honor, influence secured by the one, and the alienation, neglect and infamy entailed by the other; the warm approbation and interest felt in the prosperity of the virtuous, and the indignation occasioned by the triumphs of villainy; and especially the obvious desire of all men to sustain in the eyes of others a character for virtue. How does this last fact show the value of a reputation for virtue as the means of human happiness, and that to insure the results we must sustain the character.

Here it is proper to mention the consequences of virtue and of vice to mankind as subjects of parental and civil governments. These are too obvious to need any specification. They bear however as directly on our argument as any other forms of good and evil, since they are the results of institutions inseparable from our earthly condition, and made so by the appointment of God.

The consequences of a virtuous and vicious course of life to the inner man claim a more particular consideration. I have already had occasion to exhibit the nature and tendency of virtue to give perfect happiness to its subject, and those of vice to produce unqualified misery. I now refer to their actual effects, to some of which I will briefly advert. Consider their influence on our worldly desires and sensual appetites, which if ungratified, are the most fruitful source of unhappiness to man. But let the objects of these desires and appetites be what they may, wealth, honor or pleasure, they are never gratified. So long as they are uncontrolled by virtuous principle, they are always excessive, always stronger than the nature and value of their object warrant, and beyond its power to gratify. Lust, ambition, avarice torment the breast which cherishes them, and in their nature are only specific forms of selfishness, deceiving, enslaving and vexing the mind, while in their consequences they are often calamitous and dreadful. The abandoned drunkard is only a full length portrait of uncontrolled appetite. Though avarice, ambition and other lusts do not in each individual instance produce the same degree of evil, yet the aggregate which each has occasioned in this world is scarcely less, perhaps greater, than that which drunkenness has produced. Assuredly we all know that the world is full of unhappiness through the influence of ungoverned and selfish appetite. Now true virtue leads its possessor to love and desire, different objects according to their relative and real value. It gives to the greatest and to every inferior good its proper place, and thus removes all excessive desires and with them the cause of inward torment.

Consider now the influence of virtue, as it regulates our passions. No small portion of the unhappiness of man results from envy, anger, peevishness, impatience, revenge. Who can deny their power to annoy

and torment the mind? Who can say, as he wishes for enjoyment tomorrow, that he hopes to be angry, fretful, envious, revengeful? Is he who indulges these tempers happy in himself, or is he the man who contributes to the happiness of others, or is he a tormentor of himself and of others? And yet these passions disquiet more or less every human bosom in which true virtue has not broken their dominion. Look now at the man who governs himself. How gracefully he sways the scepter! With what serenity and dignity he passes onward through life! How equable his career! In a world full of jarring elements and violent changes, no clouds of discontent, no whirlwinds of passion, obscure or disturb the steady sunshine of the soul. Like the sun in the heavens, he is far above the storms and tempests that infest and darken and agitate all beneath him.

Similar remarks apply to all those peculiarities of temper and propensity, which are seriously calamitous to individuals. Is one the victim of that melancholy that throws its gloom over every bright prospect--is he hurried into calamities by indecision and levity of spirit--has he that selfish insensibility that shuts him out from all the sympathies and joys of earthly friendships--has he become the victim of dissipation and wayward prodigality, what other remedy so effectual as to bring him under the influence of virtuous principle? What like this can fix the inconstant, embolden the timid, strengthen the weak, reclaim the abandoned, and save the lost--what else can correct every infirmity, heal every mental disease, and give health and strength and perfection to the soul of man?

But the most terrible of all calamities which shake the soul, is the fear of an avenging God. We know what thoughtlessness and worldliness, absorption in business and pleasure, can do to blind us to this evil. But we know as well that it cannot be wholly avoided by wicked men. Even the hardest in guilt cannot become wholly insensible to these forebodings. Catiline and Nero felt remorse of conscience. The hardihood of a fiend cannot prevent it. There is the impression of a futurity on all human spirits. Every one has a conscience. All know that they have always and deliberately crossed and thwarted the will of another, and that he is no less than an infinite Being; they know, that thus to cross the will

of that Being is to offend him, and that they have always done it. They are afraid of death because they are afraid of God. They know that if there is a just retribution to sustain the prerogatives of heaven's Sovereign, and unfulfilled penalties to avenge their violation, they must fall on them. There is an emphatic voice of remonstrance and warning which they cannot quell, and a fearful looking for of judgment they cannot avoid. What is the remedy for these evils, and for those that spring from this alienation of the creature from his Creator--from this aversion of heart to the Almighty Sovereign of heaven and earth, but to return to affection and friendship--what but virtue, religion? I say not here whether God be placable or not. But I ask, what other hope have we, or can we have, if not from conformity, to his will? Suppose him a selfish, even a malignant Being, what better can we do than to return to duty; what better, if we would secure the friendship of such a Being, than to do his will. If he is placable--aye, if too he is infinitely good, then what may we not hope for? The answer is in the feelings of an immortal, who has seen and felt his desert of punishment--of the vengeance of the Almighty, but is now reposing in the bosom of infinite love.

I might dwell here on the advantages of virtue in every condition of human life. In youth, what else can so protect from every danger and evil, and open such bright prospects for future life? In old age, when decrepitude of body and the sinking faculties of the mind seem to open our graves, what else shall console us? Under affliction, how disconsolate were human sorrow, with no appeal but to the unfeeling rock that crushes us. Friends forsake or betray us--all whom we love die--disease assails, which no remedies can reach, poverty sinks us from affluence to want; death comes--every arm is palsied, every countenance is pale in weakness and despair what shall sustain us? Nothing but virtue--nothing but religion--nothing but doing the will of God. The love of God, the fixed purpose to do his will, gives hope of his favor. Nothing else can convert our very trials into blessings, and give the hope of a brighter world. This can change the gloom of the dark valley into the twilight of an eternal morning, and the dark grave into the gate of heaven. All else is darkness without light, guilt without hope, fear, remorse, terror, ruin and wretchedness.

Why then are there, in the providence of God, such clear and abundant advantages in the practice of virtue, if it be not his design to allure men to the practice of it? Why does he thus shut them up to virtue, to religion, as their only hope of his favor, if not to assure them that in this way they shall obtain it.

(2.) The blessings of life, contemplated as the gifts of a divine Benefactor, tend by a strong influence, to reclaim men to the practice of virtue. It is philosophic truth, that "the goodness of God leadeth to repentance." Nor is there any kind of moral influence so powerfully adapted to this end as manifested kindness, which is sure to produce affection in return. This influence reaches the last and lowest stages of human profligacy; for few are so obdurate as not to feel its thrilling efficacy. Nor can I conceive it possible, that an unperverted mind should contemplate this sinful world, in its unworthiness of the favors of its Maker, and also the ceaseless and abundant Communication of blessings to those who deserve only his displeasure; the solicitude with which he watches, the care with which he protects, the compassion with which he relieves, the kindness with which he blesses, and not feel a mighty and an almost irresistible attraction to do the will of such a Benefactor. How is it possible that intelligent beings, qualified as we are, to read the clear intimations of our Maker's will in our constitution and circumstances as moral beings, and made as we are, the constant objects of his more than paternal care and kindness, can doubt or disregard his design to recover us to obedience and to the enjoyment of his favor? What child, in similar circumstances, could question the design of paternal love?

(3.) The natural evils of life justly and soberly estimated bespeak the same design. We no sooner inquire into the end which these evils are fitted to accomplish in respect to man, than we see that it is to restrain men from vice and restore them to virtue. The most striking fact in regard to these evils is, that to a vast extent they result from the wrong state of the heart and conduct of the life. It is suffering in connection with sin, telling us a truth we cannot fail to know, that if we would prevent the effect, we must remove the cause; and far more distinctly and more impressively, that as God loves our happiness he loves also our virtue,

and that he will secure the one only by means of the other. So plainly, so forcibly is this great truth taught in the providence of God, that every man knows and feels it in much the same manner as that, if he would avoid the sensation of being burned he must keep himself from the fire. By these evils too the insufficiency and vanity of earthly joys are made obvious in a manner the most impressive to the wayward mind of man. Let him take his lesson from these evils, let him take it from the sufferings, the agonies, the last breath of a dying man, and who would not realize what the world is? In the evils of life we are furnished with abundant opportunities for the exercise of all, and especially of the more difficult and nobler virtues. Even in those evils to which we are subject through what we call inadvertence or rashness, rather than by the execution of any criminal purpose, we find a powerful check to imprudence and temerity, and an impressive lesson of discretion and care, which may be indispensable to our moral well-being. Who can estimate the benefits of watchfulness to moral beings? The necessity of continued occupation and labor for our comfortable subsistence is also indirectly, and yet in the most important respects subservient to our moral interests. Its single influence to remove us from the temptations of sloth, and to deprive us of leisure to contrive and perpetrate iniquity, is sufficient to show its salutary effects on the conduct of men--to show us that what we are so apt to esteem one of the most intolerable calamities, is one of the greatest of heaven's blessings. It can scarcely be pretended, that the moral and of course all the real interests of a world in which calamities, disease, pain and death possess so benign a tendency and yet produce so little good effect, would be improved by any diminution of these evils; nor can it well be doubted that they evince the design of their author to restrain man from the perversion of his moral nature, and to restore him to virtue and happiness. What would this world be without these? Were there no disappointments, no sufferings, no death, how ferocious, how desperate were human selfishness. It would be a pandemonium rather than a paradise, over whose crimes and woes even God's mercy would despair. In a word then, in all the evils of human life we discern only the discipline and the chastisements of a father's hand, and see only "the graver countenance of his love," intending our profit by making us partakers of his holiness and his favor.

The present state of man is obviously one of trial and discipline, and as such is fitted and designed to form his character to permanent virtue. On this most important topic I have not time to dwell. The illustration of it by Bishop Butler in his ANALOGY, (P. I., Chaps. 4 and 5,) to those who will read his remarks, supersedes the necessity of any attempt on my part to exhibit the subject. Not merely the theological student and the Christian, but every man who would understand the true nature and design of his existence in this world, should read and read often, these chapters of Butler.

The general doctrine which he establishes is, that the present world is a state of moral discipline adapted and designed to improve and ultimately to confirm man in virtue and happiness in a future world. This adaptation he has traced in a variety of particulars with such clearness of illustration and force of argument, that the reality of it cannot be doubted by any candid mind. He has not indeed applied this great fact to this particular purpose, but the fact being admitted, who can doubt its application? If it be obvious and undeniable, that the constitution of man and the entire course of God's providential dispensations toward him are fitted to reclaim him from sin and to improve and confirm him in virtue and happiness, I ask whence such adaptation, if God does not design to accomplish this end. It is to no purpose to say that in respect to the greater part of men this design is not accomplished. The light of nature leaves the future particular results of the present state in many respects unknown and indeterminate. Probation, and with it this course of moral discipline, may also be continued under even more favorable auspices, till the end shall be accomplished in manner and degree worthy of the attributes of its Author. Admit however the Pact to be as supposed, it must be traced to the voluntary perversion of the design of God on the part of men, and the perversion of a design is decisive of its reality.

(5.) The happiness of mankind, to a great extent--I may even say their perfect happiness--is placed in their own power. Immeasurably the greatest portion of the miseries of human life are the result of sin and moral imperfection. Suppose that all men were perfectly conformed to the rule of benevolent action, how would this dismal world, as we are often

prone to esteem it, and darkened and afflicted as it is by sin and its woes, be cheered and brightened! Let all unkindness between man and man cease; let envy and malice, fraud, cruelty, contention, covetousness, pride, ambition and sensuality come to an end; let these be followed by perfect benevolence, under all its forms of meekness, humility, contentment, self-denial, uprightness, confidence, sympathy, a universal courteousness and cordiality; let benevolence go forth in an uninterrupted train of deeds of beneficence, and liberality pour abroad its gifts, and let gratitude and love reign pure and unruffled in every heart, and these be attended with submission, trust and joy, with the other delightful emotions of piety, and how trivial would be every possible evil--how would this world of sorrow cease to groan, and be transformed into a primeval Eden. How would all nature smile in beauty and pour forth its bounties to bless, and the sunshine of every heart welcome a present God, and tell us of a paradise regained! Does such a fact, in respect to this world of his creatures, bespeak no design of their Maker?

Can an individual doubt, in respect to the part which God desires that he should act? Can such a weight of motive as arises from this amount of good to each and to all, from the obvious practicability of its attainment as placed in their power, be furnished without being designed to move such beings to act accordingly? The question admits of but one answer, and this too plain to be stated. The whole world feels this influence. With it there is a sense of duty and of obligation, which presses hard and almost irresistibly on the human conscience, to embark in this enterprise of blessing the world; and there is a sense of guilt and self-condemnation which fastens on the soul, and compels those who live only to defeat this design of their Maker, to carry a wounded spirit with them through all their pilgrimage. Who can reflect on these things as the result of God's providential dispensations, without regarding them as the ceaseless efforts of his grace to recover man to virtue and to happiness?

There is another fact, which has too important a relation to this part of the argument to be left unnoticed; one which gives a peculiar grandeur and glory to a moral agent--that such is the nature of a moral being, that perfection in character is perfection in blessedness. Moral agency

involves, in its very nature, the power so to occupy the mind and bless the moral being with the right object of affection, that any loss of good, and any pain or suffering which are possible in the case, shall be accounted almost as nothing. (I might say, and maintain the position, that it would be in the power of a moral being, if morally perfect, to avoid all suffering, even from omnipotence at least from every created cause. I have no doubt of this fact, as one given in the true philosophy of the mind. But I present the position with the slight qualification, almost entirely to avoid suffering.

This may be illustrated in many forms, and in the commonest things. How frequently then, when thought and sensibility are wholly given to some object of absorbing interest, do we receive bodily injury without feeling or knowing the fact? Every thing is relative, not only in thought but in feeling. How unworthy in a Croesus to grieve for the loss of a farthing! Archimedes was so absorbed in the solution of his problem, that he lost his life in the sacking of the city, without being aware of his danger. Soldiers, wounded and bleeding in battle, have fought on, insensible of their wounds, till they were falling in death. Paul, in his own language, "suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dung, that he might win Christ;" and considered himself "as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." Martyrs, on the rack and in the fire, have triumphed, with hymns of praise on their lips and heaven in their hearts. The nature of mind explains all this. When then the object that engrosses the mind of a moral being is God--as he is, his designs, the end, the results at which he aims and which he will accomplish--when the heart, the whole soul of a moral being, is fixed as it may be on such an object, and so becomes "filled with all the fullness of God," why should it be thought strange that the tortures of the rack and the fire should leave the perfect blessedness of the mind unimpaired? Such is undeniably the nature of a moral being. By perfection in character he secures perfection in happiness, and becomes incapable of misery! Evil, Buffering is possible to man only through his moral imperfection.

I am not saying that perfect holiness will ever exist in this world; experience and observation forbid us to expect it. But I have called your

attention to the fact now stated, that I might ask, what is the design of God, in giving existence to moral beings? Has he not placed their happiness in their power happiness without alloy, absolute and perfect? And what is, what can be his design, but to induce man to attain it; what but to persuade him to do the will and enjoy the friendship of his Creator?

(6.) I only add in support of this conclusion, that if there is no forgiveness with God, and if the proof is decisive that there is none, then all this course of effort to reclaim to obedience must of necessity be vain and worse than in vain. Under the conviction that there is no forgiveness with God, the world would become desperate in rebellion. That God then by the entire course of providence should thus aim to restore man to virtue, and yet authorize and even render unavoidable a conviction which must render all his efforts to reclaim abortive, is incredible. The providential dispensations of God then authorize and require the conclusion that there is forgiveness for the guilty. Indeed in view of what has been said, I ask is there in the entire providence of God any thing in the least degree inconsistent with this great design of his grace--is there any want of adaptation in the means adopted for its accomplishment; can any course of providential dispensation be conceived more decisively expressive of a design to restore a lost world to duty and to happiness.

I now recur to what I claim to have proved, that God is administering his moral government on the principles of exact equity. In view of this fact we are brought to the unavoidable conclusion, that he will in a future world unfold these principles either in exact retribution or through an atonement. The former is indeed far more probable, than that he has abandoned the principles of eternal justice in his moral government. At the same time that man's present state is simply that of respite from deserved punishment under a merely legal dispensation, must be regarded as highly, even altogether incredible, when compared with the supposition of a gracious economy. In view then of the equity of God's administration, and all those influences to restore man to virtue, and those intimations of forgiveness so conspicuous in this course of his providence, the only conclusion is that God is administering his moral government through an atonement, or under a gracious economy.

One remark in conclusion. You see that if you ever become the objects of God's favor, you must do so on the same ground and on the same conditions which Christianity reveals and prescribes. Without an atonement for your sins, like that which Christianity reveals, there is no hope that you can be forgiven; without repentance for sin, the renunciation of it by doing the will of God, and a cheerful unqualified trust in his pardoning mercy, there is no true happiness for you here or hereafter.

Come then and act up to the dictates of right reason. If you have not proof that Christianity is from God, you have proof that with God there is forgiveness for the penitent sinner, and for none but him. There is, there can be no religion for you but one whose basis is an atonement for sin--a religion which involves a penitent and a contrite heart which hopes for mercy from God as the righteous avenger of sin. Act up then to the dictates of your sober judgment--conform the dictates of conscience to the will of the Being who made you, who in all his providence either smiles to invite you to his friendship, or frowns only to deter you from the guilt and the ruin of sin. Embrace that religion by which the infinite God, your Maker, your Redeemer would bless, and without which he will curse you forever--that religion which is the perfection of your nature, the end of your existence. If truth is better than falsehood, if happiness is more desirable than misery, if God as your friend is better than God as your enemy, if to meet him as your Saviour is better than to meet him as the avenger of sin, if to go to his judgment-seat fearless and triumphant is better than to go there in despairing terror, if heaven is better than hell, choose this hour with a penitent, humble and steadfast heart, the service of a redeeming God.

LECTURE VI: We must suppose God to administer his government in the way of exact retribution, or through an atonement.

Second leading proposition continued, viz. -- God administers an equitable moral government; also, God administers a moral government under a gracious economy. -- Proof 3. We must suppose God to administer his government in the way of exact retribution, or through an atonement. -- One of these is true, or God is deficient in power, or malignant in intention -- Just conception of Benevolence in God. -- What is Justice in God. -- Infidels have false views of both. -- Dispensations of God's Providence prove him not to be weak. -- The equity of a Moral government can be consistent with mercy only through an atonement. -- Alternative for the unbeliever.

IN the preceding lecture, I entered on the proof of the proposition, that God is administering an equitable moral government over men under an atonement.

I now resume the same subject, and, with some recapitulation of principles and arguments adduced in former lectures, shall attempt to prove the same thing, by showing --

In the third place, that the only admissible suppositions are, that God is administering his moral government over men either in the way of exact retribution, or through an atonement; and that as the former supposition is wholly inadmissible, it follows that he is administering it under an atonement,

I propose to show --

First, That God is administering his moral government over men either in

the way of exact retribution or under an atonement; and

Secondly, That he is administering it not in the former, but in the latter mode, or under an atonement.

First. God is administering his moral government over men either in the one or the other of these modes of administration. If he is not, it must be that it is either through want of power, or through an unkind or malignant intention toward individual subjects, or through that excessive lenity which sacrifices the general good to individual happiness.

It is not through want of power. On this point no argument, in view of the omnipotence of God, can be necessary.

It is not through malignant intention; i.e., not with the design of inflicting punishment hereafter with undue severity, or of treating his subjects worse than they deserve. This supposition would be wholly gratuitous, since there is not a pretense that in the whole course of his providence there is the least violation of individual rights. Nor would it be merely gratuitous, but against strong evidence to the contrary. Every thing that can bear on the question, in the divine administration, is decisive of benevolence to man; all that can be alleged with the least plausibility, against the exact equity of his government, being the fact that he treats his subjects better than they deserve--a fact surely very remote from authorizing even a conjecture that he will treat them hereafter more severely. Besides, malignity itself, though the manifestation of it might subvert rightful authority, cannot violate the principles of equity, in treating the rebellious subjects of God (and such are all men) worse than they deserve, for they all deserve evil. God then cannot be supposed to depart from the principles of exact equity in his moral administration, through malignant intention toward individual subjects.

Again; nor can he be supposed to do this through excessive lenity. This, in the form in which it is often presented, is the most plausible of the

suppositions which are now to be exploded, and derives its plausibility wholly from the name given it. It is called benevolence, and thus held up to our admiration as the sum and perfection of moral excellence and beauty. And what is more calamitous to the cause of truth, the defenders of the equity of God's government have often conceded, that benevolence is the proper name of the thing intended; denying that the divine moral perfection is comprised in this attribute, even when an apostle has said that "God is love, and maintaining, that justice in God, instead of being only a modification or specific form of benevolence, is another and distinct attribute, dictating and demanding what benevolence forbids.

Let us then form some definite conceptions on this most momentous of all questions--what is benevolence in God? At least let us distinguish it from what it is not, and from what often bears its desecrated name. What then is benevolence in, God?

Is any thing which does not disapprove and abhor sin as the supreme evil, and which will not show even the highest disapprobation of it? In opposition to this, we are told that such is not the benevolence of God, and that instead of viewing him in the character of a just and righteous Sovereign, we are to regard him in no other relation than that of a benignant, tender parent, who so delights in the happiness of his family, that to promote it he will sacrifice all that can be called law, justice and equity.

We here come to the stronghold of Infidelity. Let us then ascertain the precise question to be decided. It is not whether God, as a benevolent Being, delights in the happiness of his moral creation, and desires to promote it in the only way in which it can be secured. But can he accomplish that end without the influence of an equitable moral government; in other words, can God be benevolent without being just?

What then is benevolence in God? And what is justice in God?

Benevolence in God is a disposition to secure the highest happiness, and to prevent all misery. Of course it must disapprove, hate, and abhor that which necessarily destroys the highest happiness and tends to produce all misery. But such is the nature and tendency of sin. What then is justice in God? It is simply one specific form or modification of benevolence; i.e., in respect to sin, it is benevolence, and nothing but benevolence, disapproving, abhorring, and determining to punish sin in the subjects of his government, as that which; undermines his authority, and tends to destroy the highest happiness, and to produce all evil. God then, as a benevolent being, must feel the highest disapprobation and abhorrence of sin. In proportion as he loves happiness and hates misery, he must abhor sin, as that which destroys the one and produces the other. To suppose a benevolent God then, who is not also a just God, is to suppose a benevolent God who is not benevolent.

Nor is this all. God as the governor of moral beings must show by his acts that he thus disapproves of and hates sin. He must come before his kingdom with the demonstration of his benevolence in the form of justice, either by a retribution or some equivalent manifestation of his supreme abhorrence of this evil. Words without actions in such a case are no proof in a question of character. In a moral kingdom all results in happiness and misery depend on the moral conduct of its subjects, and that depends on the influences under which they act. Of all these there is one which is absolutely essential; viz., that of the moral governor's supreme approbation of right and supreme disapprobation of every wrong moral action on their part. This is the only influence by which as a moral governor, he can move them. Motives as consisting simply in natural good and evil, whether furnished by the perceived nature and tendencies of action, or through the medium of promised good and threatened evil, are not the influence of moral government. This influence arises only from the perfect character of the governor, as manifested in his supreme approbation of right and supreme disapprobation of wrong moral action. If he has these feelings then he will manifest them by his acts. To suppose otherwise, is to suppose him not to use the most perfect means for the most perfect end; to give no evidence of his real character and of his right to govern--no proof that he is not the friend and patron of iniquity, none that he is entitled to the confidence or submission of his subjects. Nay

more, it is to suppose him to give decisive proof to the contrary; for in such a case, if he had the feelings of supreme approbation of right and supreme disapprobation of wrong action he would manifest them. The good of his kingdom demands it. Benevolence dictates and imperiously requires it, as the necessary means of the best end. If then he does not manifest these feelings, the proof is decisive against their existence, and of course that he is not worthy of the confidence and submission of his subjects, and not entitled to the throne.

Were the whole moral universe a heaven of joy and rapture, what security for its continuance even for an hour?

And why under the government of a selfish deity, will not all good and all hope terminate at any moment in the agonies and woes of sin? What sort of obedience to God would that be, secured by such influences, when there is no ground of confidence, respect or love furnished in his character? And what such ground could there be in the character of a God whose so-called benevolence dispenses with all justice and all equity, which does not supremely abhor, but actually patronizes and befriends, protects and rewards iniquity? Than that sort of benevolence, there is nothing worse in point of principle in Satan himself. Adorn it with what tender names you will, of parental love and kindness, you would actually despise it in an earthly parent or a civil magistrate, and it ought to be and would be despised in God himself by all his intelligent creation. It sinks all that is venerable and awful in heaven's sovereign as a God of benevolence, guarding the general good of his kingdom at the sacrifice of individual good, not into that which is lovely, but into that which is contemptible. Such is the God whom Infidelity worships, cheating itself with names and words, while in the incense it offers to a fancied deity, it despises the object of its own adoration. Nay, rather it forgets that the real object of its homage is and must be in principle, a being of absolute selfishness or infinite malignity. I only ask, is it possible, is it conceivable, THAT A BENEVOLENT IS NOT ALSO A JUST GOD? Can there be a benevolent God who does not supremely abhor and who will not show that he abhors the worst thing in the universe? Can a perfectly benevolent God be supposed to depart from the principles of eternal

righteousness? Will he despoil his high and inviolable sanctuary of all its sacredness--his dominion of all its majesty? Will he yield to that excessive lenity or indulgent tenderness which will darken all his glories--will he by this most fearful act of infinite malignity fill his moral creation with terror and dismay?

Let us now briefly appeal to the providence of God. Here let it be remembered, that God must be supposed either to be strictly just as a moral governor, or to be so concerned for the happiness of individual subjects, that he consents for their sake to sacrifice the equity of his moral government, and with it the highest happiness of his moral kingdom. Do then the dispensations of his providence authorize us to ascribe to him, even in conjecture, the latter character? Why--if he relinquishes the character of a righteous moral governor for that of an indulgent parent--does he give such clear and decisive indications of his supreme approbation of virtue and disapprobation of vice? Why does he render it the most manifest of all truths, that there is no way in which man can secure his own perfect happiness, or be safe against perfect misery, except by the practice of virtue? Why has he created beings whose very nature and condition on the least reflection, bring before the mind the everlasting distinction between right and wrong moral action, and constrain them to feel that by the latter they are defeating the high end of their own creation, and doing the most palpable violence to the will of an infinite Creator? Why if reluctant to make man ultimately as miserable as strict equity demands--why if thus indifferent to the rights of the public, is there no instance of individual, or at least of public injustice? Why, if God is all tenderness, does he so distinctly express his displeasure toward iniquity in the various ways of his providence, and actually produce such fearful forebodings of a coming retribution that the heart of every man trembles while going on in iniquity--that every man is afraid of death because he is to meet God? Why is it that no error, artifice or system of opinions has ever been devised, adequate to quell the dread and the disturbance which the wicked feel when they think of the Sovereign of heaven? Why is it that Universalism, Infidelity, Atheism have so often cried for his mercy when summoned by death into his presence?

Advert to another class of evils; I mean those which God brings on men, not as the natural consequence of crime, but in the exercise of his high and irresponsible sovereignty, such as those which result from disease and pestilence. Is there not a cause? Who can suppose that they are brought on moral beings without reference to their character? Who that knows that he is a sinner, a rebel against God, can feel these evils in his own person without the reflection, if not that he deserves them, at least that God is not too good to inflict the extremist evils on his creatures? What is their design but to tell us of a degree of displeasure, which confines not its expressions in evil to the direct natural results of wrong doing, and that he has still other and more fearful treasures of wrath for the workers of iniquity? What if all the sufferings and death which have been endured on the face of this earth since its creation, could be arrayed before the eye in present and distinct vision? What if all the sorrows and pains, and sighs and tears, and all the distress by sickness, pestilence, famine, earthquakes, shipwrecks, wars, the rack, the gibbet, and the fire--what if all the weeping widows and orphans, all the lamentation and mourning of parents and children, of husbands, wives, brothers, sisters what if all the massacres, the shrieks, agonies and groans of the dying--the seas of human blood and the mountains of human corpses--what if these scenes of woe and horror which have been witnessed on earth could be brought before us, and all be acted and felt over again as a present reality under our direct inspection. How should we be overwhelmed, and what should we think of that God who made and governs such a world as this? With such a spectacle of terror before us, should we reflect on nothing but his tenderness, and with our consciousness of guilt expect nothing but favors from his hands? What does the history of this world disclose, if not visible marks and traces of the vengeance of God upon it, in every age and every hour? And do these bespeak mere indulgence? Surely whatever other weakness or inconsistency may be ascribed to God, nothing is more inconsistent with the whole course of his providential dealings with men, than the weakness or inconsistency of excessive lenity. On whatever other basis man may rest his hopes of God's favor, that of mere tenderness, it would seem, must be the last. The entire history of his providence furnishes not an instance of kindness at the expense of justice, but discloses to all who read the record, a severity of dispensation which proclaims that a sovereign lawgiver and a righteous judge is on the throne of the universe. We do, we must see a God frowning at sin. And if amid these frowns we

also witness the smiles of mercy, still they are too dark and awful to authorize the hope of his favor through the mere relentings of tenderness.

We are then brought to the conclusion, that God is administering an equitable moral government over men, either according to the principles of exact retribution or through an atonement. In other words, God will show his supreme disapprobation of sin, either by inflicting unmingled and endless misery on a world of transgressors, or by some other expedient which shall equally manifest such disapprobation.

Solemn and tremendous as is this alternative, it is and must be real; and from it there is no escape, according to any principles of correct reasoning. The benevolence of God, if we assume it as the infidel does--his providence, in all its facts and principles--every consideration that bears on the subject, conducts to our conclusion; while no fact, no principle, furnishes the least opposing evidence. Deny our conclusion, and you deny the perfect justice of God; deny his justice, and you must deny his benevolence. Admit then, that he is a God of absolute selfishness, of infinite malignity, or admit his benevolence, and with it his supreme abhorrence of sin, and the manifestation of that abhorrence, either in an exact retribution hereafter or through an atonement.

This brings us to the question, in which of these only possible or conceivable modes, is God administering his moral government over this sinful world? This leads me to say,

Secondly, That he is administering it, not in the former mode, but under an atonement.

This position is fully sustained by two facts and a principle. The facts are these: the first, that God is administering an equitable moral government over men; the second, that the entire course of his providence bespeaks his design to restore man to duty and to favor. The principle is, that the

perfect equity or justice of a moral governor, can be reconciled with mercy to transgressors Only through an atonement.

In respect to the first of these facts, we have seen that God administers a moral government over men; that he does it through the medium of the best law; and that this fact, uncounteracted by any opposing evidence, is decisive proof of the perfect equity of his administration; that instead of furnishing any opposing evidence, the entire course of his providence shows him, as it were, most scrupulously avoiding every shadow of injustice--discloses the true tendency of obedience to his will, to bless, and of disobedience, to ruin the soul of man forever, and exhibits him in that severity of dispensation which comports only with the majesty of a sovereign lawgiver and righteous judge. We have seen that he has destined the subjects of his government to a future state of being, thus furnishing an opportunity for the perfect display of the equity of his administration; while the manner in which he removes them to that world tells of such a result, in the most fearful forebodings of every departing spirit; and that whether we assume and reason from his benevolence or from the facts of his providence, no other supposition can for a moment be admitted, than that of the perfect equity of his government. Shut up then to this conclusion on the one hand, we see at the same time on the other, the most satisfactory indications of his benignant design to restore man to duty and favor. The same course of providential dispensations, along with the lessons it gives of the equity of his administration, shows not less clearly the lessons of his mercy to the penitent transgressor. Every thing, as we have seen, entirely harmonizes with such an economy, and is fitted and adapted to the end of bringing man back to his duty and the friendship of his Maker; every motive which can reach and move a rational, voluntary being, whether derived from his present or future well-being; every thing in the form of manifested kindness and good-will on the part of a divine Benefactor; every thing in the form of paternal chastisement, in the nature and condition of man, adapted and designed to form his character to permanent virtue; his happiness placed so completely in his own power as a moral being every thing to invite to obedience, and to awe from transgression, which is conceivable in such a system; while all these adaptations, influences, efforts to reclaim, must be worse than in vain--must evince even malignity of intention on the part

of the Creator, if he has no design to forgive and to save.

With these things in view, let us now advert to the principle, viz., that the perfect justice of God, as a moral governor, can be reconciled with mercy to transgressors only through an atonement. This is the impossibility, already sufficiently illustrated, that God should be either benevolent or just, without manifesting his supreme abhorrence of sin. I need not say, that it were easy for infinite wisdom to devise, and infinite power to execute, a plan by which such a manifestation shall be made, in the pardon of transgressors. Here then let us judge, whether God has not adopted some plan by which the principles of eternal justice are consistent with favor to a revolted world. What else can be true, or even supposed possible, but that he is administering a perfectly equitable system of moral government over men under an economy of grace?

I say not here what will be the actual results of this economy in a future world. All that the light of nature can give on this point is at most, the general conclusion, that these results will be such as will accord with that benignity of design so conspicuous in his providential dealings. The great fact itself however, appears, to my own mind, to be shown by all the evidence of which the nature of the case admits. If it be possible to manifest to rational beings the adoption of such a system without a revelation, i.e., by merely providential dispensations, I see not why the evidence actually furnished of A JUST GOD AND A SAVIOUR, does not demand the most unhesitating belief.

To conclude. If these things are so, we see on what ground Infidelity must stand. The infidel must believe either in a malignant Deity, or in a future exact retribution of this sinful world, or in the great cardinal fact of Christianity, viz., that there is an atonement for sin. Let us look at this. If the infidel denies a full, just and exact retribution of this sinful world, and also an atonement for sin, then he is shut up to the admission of a selfish, malignant Deity. He may call him benevolent; but it is a name without the reality. Such a God is not benevolent, for he is not just. He is unjust. He is regardless, reckless of the greatest happiness of his moral

creation--unjust to his kingdom--malignant.

Again; if now the infidel still denies an atonement for sin, and admits the benevolence of God, then he is shut up to the admission of a full and exact retribution of this sinful world in utter and endless misery. On his own premises there is no escape. If any thing is true in moral reasoning, it is this: that a benevolent God, as a moral governor, and thus the guardian of his kingdom, must feel and must express an abhorrence of the supreme evil of sin, and must make that expression either by a full and exact retribution or in some other way; i.e., through an atonement. The infidel denies an atonement. The consequence is inevitable. Every subject of God's moral government is a transgressor, and doomed, without hope, to utter and endless misery. Does he say, this is in itself incredible, impossible? I reply, it is neither. The destruction of such a world as this for its rebellion against God, may be less, in comparison with his universal kingdom, than the penalties which every benevolent parent inflicts on his children compared with the end of their infliction; it may be, as I have said, an infinitesimal compared with unlimited vastness. The infidel then, on his present premises, is compelled to admit, that every human being is doomed to everlasting destruction. And if he will adopt such premises, let him abide the conclusion. He professes to reason. Let him see that he adopts premises that throw the midnight of despair over a guilty world; premises, which give only "a certain fearful looking--for of judgment and fiery indignation."

Again; if the infidel denies that such a retribution awaits this sinful world, and still maintains that God is benevolent, then, as a rational man, he must admit an atonement, even that of Christianity. If God is benevolent, he is also just; and if his justice is not manifested and vindicated by a future just retribution, then it must be by an atonement. But will any rational man admit an atonement and reject that which Christianity reveals? Let him ask, how--by what other means or expedient--can a sin-avenging God become merciful to transgressors of his law? How can he make a manifestation of his abhorrence of sin equal to that of turning a rebellions world into hell? How can the throne of eternal justice be upheld in all its strength and glory, and the defied penalties of sin be averted

from the guilty? Here, all is mystery and utter darkness. Before this problem, the intellect of man retires baffled, and confounded. No answer can be given; no conception can be formed. Christianity--Christianity alone, gives the solution. Christianity alone reveals a triune God, and shows us his throne upheld by the man that is also the eternal Logos, and a guilty. world redeemed. Christianity thus solves the problem which God alone can solve. Christianity, on this most momentous of all subjects, and with this sufficient proof of its divine origin, removes all rational doubt, satisfies all rational inquiry, and gives all rational assurance. If there is an atonement for sin, then we safely affirm, it is and must be that which Christianity describes. It is the only adequate atonement conceivable by the human mind. It is this alone which can still the agitations of conscious guilt, and bring relief to the laboring heart of sinful man. In its very nature and perfection, it bears the impress of God as its author. And can man, reasoning from his necessities as a sinner against a just and holy God, and admitting the fact of an atonement for sin, deny the atonement of Christianity? No man has done, no man ever will do it. The only alternative here is, either no atonement, or the great atonement of the son of God.

You see then what ground the infidel--every man that reasons from any possible premises in the case, must take. He must either deny the benevolence of God,--i. e., believe in a selfish, malignant deity, or in a benevolent God, with a future just retribution of this sinful world; or he must receive Christianity, with its great atoning sacrifice.

And now, what are the facts? The infidel rejects all atonement for sin. He rejects the doctrine of a future retribution, and, of course, actually lands in the belief of a selfish, malignant deity! I know indeed, that the words will not suit him; that he calls God benevolent, and loves to dwell on the goodness, and the kindness, and the tenderness of the Creator toward his creatures, as if he could cause an infringement on the Godhead by mere words, or compliment it with tender epithets out of its own divinity, and so make a benevolent, an unjust God. Such is however the fact, in his own conceptions. He conceives of a God who will sacrifice the majesty of law, the glory of his moral dominion, and the happiness of his

moral creation, in tenderness to rebels; a God, who stands before his intelligent universe the friend and patron of iniquity. This is the real, the only conception which he can form. It is no exaggeration, no caricature; it is given in his avowed creed of a benevolent God who is not just. In the sincerity of my heart then I say it; and if the infidel would reflect on his own conception, he would see that the real object of his homage, instead of a perfect God, is a perfect demon. Man, sinful, immortal man, has nothing better to confide in, than the tender mercies of an infinite fiend!

And now permit me to add; Christianity is false or Christianity is true. If false, then you must either believe in a selfish malignant deity, and consent to dwell forever amid the darkness and terrors of his fearful dominion, or you must believe in God's benevolence and, abide the more fearful doom of his just and eternal indignation. If Christianity is true--I had almost said, if it can be true--if there is but a slight probability of its truth--if it reveals what the intellect of man could never have conceived--tells us of an adequate and perfect atonement for sin under the government of a holy and just God; and proffers pardon and life where otherwise all is hopeless guilt and death for eternity; if it thus harmonizes with, illustrates, unfolds, confirms the clearest intimations of his providence--then what is Christianity, and what is Infidelity? Christianity with only these characteristics comes as a messenger from God with God's credentials. It conducts us into the very sanctuary of his glories, where justice reigns and mercy triumphs in still brighter splendor. In this holy of holies it points us to the great and perfect sacrifice for this world's redemption, and shows us without a veil of mystery, A JUST GOD AND YET A SAVIOUR. Infidelity sneers and prefers a malignant deity. The infidel rejects the message, denies the proof, despises the sacrifice, and seals his own damnation. Who that has reason and will use it, will reject Christianity for the darkness, the terrors of Infidelity? Who that has reason, will reject Christianity, with its consolations in time, its prospects for eternity, its deliverance from sin and hell, its regions of immortality and joy--its God--its Saviour? The gospel--the gospel--how unquestionable--how sure its announcement of its own character--"glad tidings of great joy to all people!"

LECTURE VII: God governs with rightful authority.

Third leading proposition: God governs with rightful authority. -- This proved by his benevolence. -- Different opinions in respect to the method of proving his benevolence. -- If it cannot be proved by the light of nature, It cannot be proved at all. -- The Scriptures assert and assume that this benevolence is manifest by the light of nature.

To establish the leading proposition before us; viz., that God is administering a perfect moral government over men, it is necessary, as we have already said, to prove the equity of his administration and also his rightful authority. The former I have already attempted. To prove the latter, it is necessary to show his competence and also his disposition to govern in the best manner. His competence is proved by showing that he is a being of infinite knowledge and power. His disposition to govern in the best manner, which involves also his perfect or infinite benevolence, now claims our consideration.

Whether God is a being of perfect benevolence, is seen at once to be one of the most momentous of all the inquiries which can engage the human mind. It is not difficult for men to believe in what they may regard as the goodness of God, under an entirely false conception of its nature; nor is it uncommon that men believe it, even with some just views of what it is, without ever having seen or heard or formed an argument by which it can be proved. I need not say of what high concern it is to us, not only that we have a right apprehension of the nature of God's goodness, but that our faith in its unchangeable reality rest on evidence which can be weakened by no sophistry, and which can be shaken by no skepticism. We have seen how prone the human mind is to form fundamentally false views of the nature of God's goodness, and to hazard all the interests of its immortal being on its own vain imaginations--mere pictures of its fancy.

I must be allowed to say, that I have not met with any proof of this divine

attribute, or any argument from reason in support of it, which would stand the test of a close logical scrutiny. Nor can it be pretended that there is such an argument fully drawn out and formally maintained in the Scriptures. Am I then asked, whether I suppose that the faith in God's moral perfection, of the pious, of those in humble life as well as of the great, the wise, and the learned, has had no sufficient basis or warrant? That is another question, and one to be answered with a decided negative. It is one thing for the mind to perceive proof or evidence, or even to go through a process of reasoning which fully sustains a conclusion, and another to state that process; and especially so to state it, that it shall be exposed to no objections which that mind cannot answer. As the knowledge of what a man is, what a tree is, what government is, what law is, what virtue is, is different from that which enables one to state with exact precision what he knows, so for the minds of men universally, to apprehend the evidence of God's goodness in such a manner as to authorize and demand their faith, and to be a just ground of condemnation if they disbelieve, is a very different thing from being able to present in formal statement, all the premises and principles on which a just conclusion depends, with such logical precision, that the argument when stated, shall be unanswerable. How much false reasoning has been used by great and good men in support of truth! How many just conclusions have been adopted and acted upon, even with reason, for which men can give no reason!

The difficulties which have been supposed to embarrass the great question now before us, have led some minds of singular acuteness and power to conclude, that there is no proof from any source, or from all sources combined, that God is good. Some have maintained, that the benevolence of God can be proved, both from the light of nature and from revelation, as separate and independent grounds of argument; others, that if proved at all, the argument must be derived chiefly; others, that it must be derived wholly from revelation; and others still, that a conclusive argument can be derived exclusively from the light of nature, and that otherwise the divine benevolence cannot be proved at all.

It has been a question with some, whether it be of any importance that

the two sources of proof be separated from each other. That they should frequently be combined, especially in popular exhibitions of the subject, I believe; that having evinced the benevolence of God, by satisfactory proof from the light of nature, we can and may augment it by appealing to revelation, I see no reason to doubt. At the same time, I am convinced that we must find satisfactory proof of the benevolence of God from the light of nature, before we can appeal with the least propriety or force to revelation; and that of course the light of nature must be resorted to, as furnishing a separate and independent ground of argument. If this be not done, then we must come to the revelation of God without proof of his moral perfection, either assuming, his veracity, which is only one, form of his benevolence, and therefore involves the very thing to be proved, without which we are forbidden by the laws of evidence to believe his declarations. The bearing of these considerations upon heathenism, and deism or infidelity, are sufficiently obvious to show the importance and necessity of producing from the light of nature, if possible, the universal and unhesitating belief of the perfect benevolence of the Creator. To the mind not fully convinced of the goodness, and consequently of the truth or veracity of God, the questions, whether God has actually given a revelation to the world, and what that revelation contains, must be comparatively trivial and uninteresting inquiries.

Beyond this, if there is no proof of God's moral perfection from the light of nature, then revelation itself finds the human mind free from all obligation to him, which results only from these prior proofs, and which imparts such high concern to the inquiry, whether such a being has given to man the oracles of eternal truth. How entirely different the questions are, whether a perfect God has given a revelation to the world, and whether it can only be claimed to be a revelation from a being whose moral perfection can be legitimately doubted or denied.

Besides, if God in his works of creation and providence, manifests his goodness to the clear apprehension of his moral creatures, who can doubt their obligation to mark his footsteps here, and to adore and worship with grateful praise amid these displays of his Godhead? Who shall refuse "to look through nature up to nature's God," because he has

in his revelation manifested the same glories in still brighter splendors? If he has opened two books before us, why should we not learn from both what God is? Especially, if the light of nature furnishes the only proof of the moral perfection of the Creator in such a respect, that without it, none which is sufficient and satisfactory can be furnished by revelation, then, in exploring the field of evidence spread out before us in the works of God, the most diligent research becomes us.

In expressing the opinion that the benevolence of God cannot be proved from revelation, I would not be understood to affirm, that when the fact is once fairly proved from the light of nature, additional evidence in support of it cannot thus be derived. When I am convinced, on sufficient grounds, of the excellence of another's character, I reasonably regard those acts which may proceed from benevolence as actually proceeding from, and as additional proofs of it. Nor would I be understood to say, that no aid can in any respect be derived by us from a revelation, in the investigation of this subject. This is quite possible. Thus, without assuming the veracity of God, which, as I have said, would be assuming the thing to be proved, the revelation may contain propositions whose truth the mind perceives, independently of their divine authority. These propositions may furnish the premises of a conclusive argument. The argument however, would still be one from reason, as truly as a demonstration of a problem in geometry, though it depends on the definitions of Euclid. A revelation may even contain the same argument which is furnished by the light of nature. In this case also, it would be, strictly speaking, one from reason, though reason would never have discovered it without a revelation.

I shall now attempt to show,

That the benevolence of God cannot be proved by any argument derived merely from revelation, as distinguished from an argument derived from the light of nature.

Every proof on this subject, derived merely from revelation, must depend on some declaration or declarations of its Author. These must be supposed to consist of those in which he directly declares his own moral

perfection, or of those in which he asserts such designs and doings, as in their own nature shall be proof of his moral perfection. In neither case however, can mere declarations be relied on, any further than we assume and rely, upon the veracity of the author. But veracity in God, in the only form in which we can rely upon it in him, is only one form of his benevolence, and necessarily implies it. To assume his veracity then, is to assume his benevolence, which is the very thing to be proved. Or thus: if we rely on the veracity of the Author of revelation, we must do so either with reason or without reason. If with reason, then we have proof of his veracity, and of course of his benevolence, prior to, and independently of his declarations. If we rely on his veracity, prior to and independently of his declarations, without reason, then we gratuitously assume his veracity, and of course his benevolence; that is, we assume the very thing which is to be proved. If then the benevolence of God cannot be proved from the light of nature, it cannot from revelation, and therefore cannot be proved at all.

The contrary however, has been strenuously maintained; and it may give more satisfaction if we examine some of the grounds of this claim. These, so far as I deem them worthy of notice, are the three following, viz.:

1. It is claimed that the declarations of any being, and therefore of God, are entitled to credit, on the general principle which gives credibility to testimony.
2. It is claimed, that any being may establish, and that God has established his character for veracity, on the ground of the uniform coincidence of his declarations with facts--as that many of the historical facts of Scripture are confirmed by profane history; that all its predictions, promises, and threatenings, have in due time been fulfilled; and that in this way we have a full confirmation of the veracity of their author.
3. It is claimed, that the Scriptures themselves, in their own character, or in the nature of what they assert concerning God, his designs and

doings, especially the giving of his perfect law, with the pure and holy precepts of the gospel, the grand scheme of redemption, and his purpose to counteract and overrule all evil for the production of the highest good of the universe, furnish abundant and decisive proof of the benevolence of God.

Now it is obvious, that the question at issue depends, in each of these modes of reasoning, on the veracity of the witness. If this be not presupposed and assumed, there can be no argument or proof in either case. What I claim then is, that the assumption of the veracity of the witness is, as the case is now presented, made on grounds which are wholly insufficient, and in a manner forbidden by the laws of just reasoning.

And first in regard to testimony, and the general principle of its credibility. It is so obviously for the interest of men, in most cases, to speak truth rather than falsehood, that there is a strong and convincing probability that, in most cases, they actually do so. With this probability the results fully accord; for men speak truth in a vast majority of instances. A declaration, with these presumptions in favor of its truth, is what we call credible testimony, and what we justly esteem, in many cases, even from a stranger, good and conclusive evidence. But how is it, when presumptions against its truth, and not in its favor, exist? If he who testifies is justly presumed to be liable from a regard to his own interest to do so falsely, it destroys the weight of his testimony. Hence no man is allowed to testify before any civil tribunal in his own case. "If I bear witness of myself," said the Saviour, "my witness is not true."

Here then we have one principle which utterly vitiates all the supposable proof of God's benevolence, which is derived merely from revelation, whether he bears witness of himself in asserting it, or in the form of asserting other facts as proofs of this. Who does not know how well it comports with the character of the most selfish and ambitious of rulers, even of the veriest tyrants, to boast of their benevolent designs, and to parade their schemes of public utility for the advancement of their selfish purposes? Can we then rely with confidence, and this in a case in which our highest interests are pending, on the veracity and so on the mere

testimony of another, when he may be under a powerful inducement to testify falsely? But the case before us is much stronger. It is one in which, if real benevolence exist, proof of it must also exist, and yet does not. It is maintained on one side of the present question, that God as the Creator and providential governor of the world, furnishes by his acts no proof of his benevolence. Now such a fact, if it be a fact, is entitled to something more than a mere negative influence in the argument. It is a direct positive proof against his benevolence which sets aside every possible declaration of it. To what purpose would a parent whose treatment of his dependent offspring for a long course of years, had given no proofs of his love, make and repeat assertions of his kindness? It is the hypocrisy which unmasks itself by saying to the naked and to the hungry, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, "and giveth nothing. "As the body without the spirit is dead" so benevolence without works, as truly as faith, is dead also.

This mode of reasoning applies not less to the Creator than to his creatures. That he should give existence to such a world as this, and govern it by his providence for thousands of years, and yet furnish no convincing evidence of his goodness to the pensioners of his bounty--that the most sincere and humble inquirer into the ways of his providence should be unable to find the least trace of goodness--one solitary footstep of benevolence to call forth his gratitude and praise--this surely were enough not merely to authorize doubt and suspicion, but it would amount to a direct and positive proof against his goodness. If he is good, why are there no proofs of his goodness in his acts? Why is the wide field of his providence thus barren of all that can bespeak the love of the Creator to his own creatures? What has employed the resources of his Godhead, while his dependent offspring have been thus forsaken and unblessed? Actions speak louder than words. His providence tells his character, and is a full revelation of a selfish heart. And is such evidence to be set aside by his own testimony to his own excellence? Is such the character of the being, revealed by the most decisive of all manifestations, confirmed by the most unquestionable of all proofs, by acts and doings, by his treatment of the myriads of his dependent creatures since time began; and is he to command our confidence by mere assertions of his goodness? Are mere words to be believed? Are creatures with such an

experience at the hands of their Creator, to be required to render to him the homage of their gratitude and praise? Every voice would be dumb, every heart would be cold. And yet on no other basis have many able divines rested the proof of God's benevolence.

But we are told that God has established his character for veracity on the ground of the uniform coincidence of his declarations with facts. With our authorized and habitual convictions that the Author of the Scriptures is a being of perfect goodness and truth, our belief in his testimony is justly confirmed and strengthened by tracing the exact and uniform coincidence between his declarations and facts. But how would it be, provided we had no antecedent reason to believe that he would speak truth rather than falsehood; and especially if we had good antecedent reason for denying his moral perfection, and with it his veracity? Though we suppose a coincidence between facts and the declarations of another to any indefinite extent, still there are other ways in which he may wholly forfeit a character for veracity. There is truth in the vulgar saying--that he who will steal will also lie. A man may uniformly speak truth from selfish considerations, and yet in other ways evince that want of moral principle which destroys all ground of confidence in his veracity, and pre-eminently in his declarations of the excellence of his own character. Be the coincidence then between facts and the declarations of God what it may, still the principles already stated apply. In the case supposed, he testifies in his own case, while were he perfectly benevolent, there would be proof of his benevolence from his works. These considerations, especially the latter, set aside all evidence from his mere assertions that he is good, and even prove that he is not good. This is obviously, entirely overlooked by those who maintain, that the coincidence of his declarations with facts is proof of his veracity. They assume that a failure to manifest his goodness by his works, is no proof that he is not good. The more however we should reflect on such a fact, if it were a fact, the stronger would be its impression. For how could this world of creatures thus cast away from the favor and affection of their Maker--thus doomed to an exile and an orphanage in which no tokens of paternal love should gladden their existence--how could they confide in the character of such a Father?

But it is said, that in his revelation God declares his will in the form of his perfect law, as well as the great design of redeeming mercy, and the purpose to render evil, even moral evil, the means of the highest possible good to his creation. Be it so. But then it is his mere declaration which has no higher claims to our confidence than any other. As testimony in respect to his own particular designs, it is his testimony to his own excellence. It is his own testimony of his unexecuted will as a lawgiver, and of his unexecuted purposes as a providential disposer of events. And not only so, it is testimony designed to evince his goodness, when, according to the supposition on which we reason, there is no, proof of his goodness from his works; and when therefore as we have shown, there is decisive proof that he is not good; and of course when no confidence is due to the supposed testimony.

But let us briefly advert to the particular facts which are now alleged. And to take the last first; it is said that the Scriptures teach that moral evil in the world is the necessary means of the greatest good, and will be overruled for the production of this result; and great, even the chief reliance in this argument has been placed on this assumption. Without here proposing a full examination of this gratuitous assumption, I shall simply say that the Scriptures teach no such dogma; and that if they did, it would prove that their author, in preferring the worst kind of action to the best, is himself the worst of beings; is insincere as a lawgiver, the friend and patron of sin, and an enemy to the happiness of his own creation. But it is said that in his revelation God has given to men the best law. This is admitted; and further, that the act of giving such a law is good and sufficient evidence of his goodness were it uncounteracted by opposing evidence. He has given the best law. But how shall we know that this law is a real expression of his will, especially if, as it is also said, he prefers, all things considered, wrong to right moral action? The act of giving the best law is no proof of his benevolence, unless it be also proved that the law is a real expression of his will, of his preference of right to wrong moral action, all things considered. But it would not be out of character for a deceiver to resort to the artifice of giving the best law for the very purpose of deception; and especially when it is supposed as it now is, that all his other acts and ways of providence fail to prove his goodness and so prove that he is not good, how can we doubt that the

act is done for the purpose of deception? I am not saying that the well attested fact that God has revealed the best law can have no place in any argument for his goodness, but in view of the supposed fact that there is no other proof of his goodness from his works of creation and providence, that the giving of the best law can furnish no proof of his goodness, but is rather to be viewed as an artifice of deception.

But it is said that God in his revelation declares his great design of redeeming mercy. This is of course admitted. But it is still simply his own declaration, and the same objections he against this as against all others considered as proofs of his goodness. The excellence of this scheme is obvious and undeniable. But what does it amount to but proof of wisdom to devise the most perfect means for the most perfect end, while it so greatly fails to accomplish under the government of its author, the end to which it is adapted, and for which it is professedly devised? And under this aspect, how is it to be regarded when it is supposed that the works of his providence decisively disprove his goodness, except as another artifice to deceive his dependent creatures?

The general principle on which the preceding discussion has proceeded is, that works, not words, are the legitimate evidence on a question of character. Though cases occur in which declarations are coincident with conduct, and augment the proof of moral rectitude, and though they may be entitled to credit, when they can be supposed to be made only with a benevolent design; yet in all cases in which the declarations may be fairly traced to some selfish or sinister desire, and especially in which benevolence or moral rectitude, if it exist, will manifest itself in conduct and does not, the proof is decisive against the existence of such a principle.

"The word of God itself," says President Edwards, "is no demonstration of the supreme distinguishing glory of God any otherwise than by the works of God, and that in two ways. First, as we must have the perfections of God first proved by his works, in order to know that his word is to be depended on. Secondly, as the works of God appealed to and declared in

the word of God, declare and make evident that divine greatness and glory which the word declares. There is a difference between declaration and evidence. The word declares, and the works are proper evidence of what is declared."--MISCELL. OBSERVATIONS.

If these remarks are just, then whatever illustrations or additional evidence of the divine goodness may be furnished by those works and designs of God, which are declared in his word, when we have acquired confidence in his moral perfection by a contemplation of his works of creation and providence, it is plain that without this previous ground of confidence, the word of God can furnish no sufficient proof that he is good.

The Scriptures also fully sustain the views which have now been taken of this important subject. First, in demanding the faith of men in Christianity, they always either assume on sufficient grounds the moral perfection of God, or they prove it from the light of nature. In those cases in which men admitted the moral perfection of God, the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles for the most part at least, rest their claim for the reception of the gospel, on the fact that its doctrines and its precepts are from God. In those other instances in which the claim could possess no force with men who did not admit the moral perfection of the Deity, or when they would increase its power, they appealed to the works of God. One of the most decisive of these arguments, when properly understood, is used by our Lord in the short but incontrovertible assertion, "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." MATT. c. v. v. 45. To appreciate the force of this argument however, we must revert to the concession of those to whom it was addressed, and the corresponding and proper assumption of our Lord; viz., the great fact of God's perfect moral government over men as the best means of the best end, and as such the only system worthy of a perfect God. With this great fact admitted by the mind, we at once see and feel the force of our Lord's appeal to the ceaseless and rich bounties of God's providential goodness, as conferred on creatures so guilty and so ill-deserving. Another is made by the apostle when enforcing on the Gentiles at Lystra, and also at Athens, their obligation to become the

worshippers of the true God: "Who in time past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways; nevertheless, he left not himself without witness--in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." ACTS, xiv. 16, 17; and xvii. 23, 28.

Secondly. The apostle in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, very fully affirms that the moral perfection of God is manifest under the light of nature. Here he not only asserts the abundant manifestation of God in his works, even his whole deity, but on this basis declares that under these manifestations merely, they are without excuse, because they glorified him not as God. What more could men do even under the light of revelation? And to put the particular question now at issue beyond all further debate, the apostle expressly asserts their inexcusableness, because they were unthankful. I only ask how could they be under obligations to be grateful to a being, of whose goodness they had no proofs and which therefore they were bound to disbelieve?

LECTURE VIII: The benevolence of God may be proved.

Third leading proposition continued, viz.: God governs with rightful authority. -- The benevolence of God may be proved, 1. From his natural attributes. -- Nature of the argument -- 2. From his works. -- Preliminary definitions and explanations. -- God is proved to be perfectly benevolent, by showing, (a) that the present system may be the best possible; (b) that it is the best possible. -- Prop. (a) considered. -- Objection from existence of evil. -- Evil is natural and moral. -- Natural evil considered in the sufferings of infants, of animals, and of men as moral beings.

To complete the argument for the perfection of God's moral government over men, it remains to prove his benevolence.

On this interesting subject we have two sources of argument--the natural

attributes of God, and his works of creation and providence.

I. The argument from his natural perfections.

This argument has not, I think, been often, if ever, presented in its full force. It being obvious that the evidence from this source, whatever it may be, must after all depend in one respect on what appears in his works--so depend on this, that if they, including what he does and fails to do, furnish decisive proof against his benevolence, little reliance can be placed on any argument derived from his natural attributes. Hence in almost all inquiries on the subject, the attention has been chiefly and properly directed to the works of God; and in view of the difficulties which these are supposed to offer, the argument from the former source has rarely been presented as having the strength which it actually possesses. In saying this however, I do not mean to imply that it has any force, until the difficulties which result from the existence of evil are fully removed. If this can be done, or if all decisive proof against his benevolence can be removed, then, in my view, this argument will be in a high degree conclusive.

I will here briefly attempt to unfold the nature of it, assuming that there is no counteracting evidence from any other source.

To estimate this kind of evidence of moral character--that which arises from the nature and circumstances of moral beings--it should be remembered, that while it is quite supposable that it should be wholly counteracted by opposing evidence from conduct or works, it is, when thus uncounteracted, in a high degree convincing and satisfactory. As contemplated, for example, our first parents in paradise, or the angels in heaven, and reasoned a priori from their constitution and circumstances, with no opposing evidence, we should conclude strongly in favor of their moral perfection. If however, we had known other beings of the same constitution and in similar circumstances, who had sinned, our confidence in this conclusion would be greatly diminished; and if such

cases were common, it would be lessened still more, until it is easy to see that we should reasonably doubt, or form an unfavorable opinion.

In respect to the Infinite Being, this a priori argument can be weakened only by one or both of these considerations--that beings far inferior to him, though formed in his image, have become selfish; and that no account can be given of existing evils under his government, which shall be consistent with his benevolence. The former consideration loses nearly, if not all its influence, from the fact that the beings are creatures, finite, and greatly limited in their powers, to say nothing of the manner in which they commence their moral existence. The argument then, from the infinite natural perfections of God, for his benevolence, if weakened at all, must be weakened only by the existence of evil. This, we hope to show hereafter, has no such influence. If so, then the argument from his natural perfections is justly regarded as conclusive.

II. The argument from his works.

There is perhaps no single question in natural theology, to the investigation of which more theological talent has been applied, than to this--whether the benevolence of God can be proved from the light of nature, or from, his works? The difficulties which have been supposed to pertain to it, and which have been regarded as peculiarly formidable, result from the existence and prevalence of evil in the world. Accordingly. the problem, whence cometh evil under the government of a perfect God, has employed from the earliest ages the ingenuity of speculative minds, and given rise to various theories for its solution. The most celebrated of these are the theory of preexistence, the theory of the Manicheans, and the theory of optimism. The last of these, if we understand by it the general doctrine, that the present system of means and influences, compared with any other, is the best possible to the Creator, has not only obtained the greatest prevalence, but seems to me to be the only one which is entitled to consideration. Different philosophers however, who have agreed in this general doctrine, have adopted two different specific theories, or have maintained two kinds of optimism. One class have

maintained that all evil, both natural and moral, is the necessary means of the greatest good; while the other has denied this in respect to moral evil, and maintained, that in respect to divine prevention, it is incidental to the best system of means. These specific theories they agree in this: that the system which God has adopted, including both the beings created and the influences under which they act, is to him the best possible system. They agree also in respect to natural evil, that it is the necessary means of the greatest good, but differ in respect to moral evil, as I have already stated. They both proceed however on the assumption, as every theory to be in the lowest degree plausible as a vindication of the divine benevolence must, that there is an impossibility somewhere in the nature of things, that God should adopt a system wholly excluding moral evil. They differ however in respect to the question, where in the nature of things this impossibility lies; the one supposing it to be in the nature of moral evil, as being the necessary means of the greatest good, and that therefore God could not produce the highest good or happiness without sin or moral evil as the means of it; the other supposes that the impossibility may or does lie, not in the nature of moral evil, but in the nature of a moral system, as the necessary means of the greatest good, and that therefore God could not produce the highest happiness without adopting a moral system, to which moral evil, in respect to his prevention, is incidental.

If time allowed, it might be useful to show how the controversies on this subject have been occasioned and prolonged by the ambiguities of language, and unauthorized assumptions in reasoning. This however I shall attempt no farther than I think it necessary to give precision to some of the phraseology which I adopt in the present discussion.

By benevolence then, when applied to God, I mean a disposition or governing purpose to produce the greatest good, or the highest happiness in his power. Of course, to evince his benevolence, he must show that he actually does that which is fitted on the whole to produce the greatest good in his power. It is however maintained by some able writers on the subject of the divine goodness, to be a sufficient proof of it, that there is more happiness than misery in the world, and that the

present system, with its results, is better than none. It is undoubtedly true, that unless these things are so--at least, unless it can be shown that the present system with its results is better than none, it can furnish no proof of the benevolence of the Creator. But if these facts be established, it will not follow necessarily that God is benevolent; for that there is more happiness than misery in the world, is no proof that the Creator might not have produced a still greater amount of happiness than he does or will produce; nor from the fact, that the present system with its results is better than none, does it follow, that the Creator might not have adopted a system still better. And surely no argument can be necessary to show that a perfectly benevolent Creator will adopt the best system in his power.

In this assertion however, it is not implied that God has not given existence to some other world or worlds, in which there is more happiness than in this. My meaning is, that if God is benevolent, he could not have made a better world than this in its stead. For it by no means follows, that because he has made another world in which there is more happiness, that benevolence did not require the creation of this. Not to have created just such a world, or to have created any other in its stead, might have ruined all other worlds. Nor is this all. The existence of this world may be better than its non-existence, as resulting in a greater amount of happiness to the universe than would exist without it. Not to have created this world just as it is compared with creating it, or creating any other in its stead compared with creating this, might have diminished the amount of happiness on the whole, compared with that which depends on the creation of this world.

There is perhaps no view of this subject, which has so much plausibility, and which is more apt to embarrass the investigation of it, than that now adverted to. God it is said, or thought, has made one heaven of perfect happiness, why not make another, instead of such a sinful, suffering world as this? I answer: you overlook at least two things, either or both of which may be true in fact; the one is, the mutual dependence of worlds, like that of the members of a human body; the other is, that not to have created this world might have left a deficiency in the sum of happiness in the universe, which could not have been supplied by creating any other in its stead. Be these things however, as they may, the position is

incontrovertible, that a benevolent God will produce the greatest good in his power; and that therefore whatever he does in any given instance, must be not only better than to do nothing, but the best thing which he can do in that instance.

It is well here to recur to an important distinction made in another connection, between the greatest possible good, and the greatest good possible to God. It has been often assumed, that the greatest good possible or the greatest conceivable good, is possible to God; and that therefore the greatest conceivable good, and the greatest good possible to God are identical. This is obviously an unauthorized assumption. For what is plainer, than that God may have created a system, which will result in the greatest good possible to him; i.e., the greatest good which he can secure; but which would result in still greater good, were creatures to employ their powers in a perfect manner. Whether it is to be assumed, that God can so control the agency or actions of his creatures, as to secure the greatest possible good, which would result from his agency and theirs combined and perfectly employed, will be a topic of future inquiry. The only remark demanded for my present purpose is, that if it may be true, that the greatest possible good is not possible to God, then it cannot be necessary to the proof of his benevolence to show, that he has secured, or will secure, the greatest possible good; for it is obvious, that a being decisively evinces his benevolence who shows that he does all the good possible to him, though less good be produced than would have been, had others afforded their active co-operation.

The phrase, greatest possible good, is often used by different writers, and even by the same writer in different senses, and has thus occasioned controversy and false conclusions. Hence has resulted the doctrine, that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good. Assuming that a benevolent God must produce the greatest possible good, meaning the greatest possible on the supposition that creatures produce as much good by their agency as they can, many have inferred, and justly from such premises, that sin is the necessary means of the greatest possible good. For if the greatest possible good, that is, the greatest good possible from the combined agency of God and of creatures, is

produced, then it is done by that agency as actually employed, and is of course produced to a vast extent by sin. Of course, there, could not have been as much good effected by any action of creatures in its stead, as by sinful action. Sinful action therefore, would be the necessary means of the greatest possible good. Not here to dwell on the palpable absurdity, that the worst kind of action should be the best kind of action; nor even to specify other absurdities equally palpable, involved in this supposition, I wish only to remark, that it cannot be necessary to maintain, that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good, for the purpose of proving the benevolence of God. If the present system is better than none, it will be sufficient for the purpose of proving the benevolence of the Creator to show, that he will secure as much good as he can, or as is possible to him, although more good would have been the result, had men done their duty. It is surely a strange principle, that a being, to evince his benevolence, must produce more good than he can, even all the good which might be produced by the active co-operation of all other beings; or, that it is not enough for this purpose, that he produce the greatest good in his power.

The question then is this: What is sufficient proof of this fact? I answer, these two things; that it appears that what he does is better than to have done nothing; and that there is no proof that he could have done better. If these two things can be shown, they afford sufficient and decisive evidence that he does all the good in his power, and is therefore benevolent. This proof may be increased.

When what he does is better than to have done nothing, and when there is no proof, that he could have done better, then, if what he does can be clearly shown to be fitted in its true nature and tendency to produce the highest conceivable or the highest possible good, this greatly augments the proof of his benevolence; because it most decisively proves that he has done all the good he can, whether the greatest conceivable good be actually produced or not.

Take for illustration, a system of parental education. Suppose it, plainly

better than none, and that there is not the slightest reason to believe that the parent could have done any thing better than he has done, who could doubt his benevolent intention? In addition to these things, suppose the system adopted by the parent is seen and known beyond a doubt, to be fitted to accomplish the result in the highest conceivable degree, then who can doubt whether he has done all he could to accomplish the best result, whether it be actually secured or not?

On these simple and obvious principles, I now propose to prove that-

GOD IS PERFECTLY BENEVOLENT.

I propose to show --

1. That the present system may be not only better than none, but the best possible to the Creator.
2. That it is not only better than none, but is the best possible to the Creator.

The design of the former position is to meet in the outset of our argument the full force of the objection to God's benevolence, which is derived from the existence of evil. For if the present system, notwithstanding the evil which exists, MAY BE not only better than none, but the best possible to the Creator, then the existence of evil furnishes no evidence at all that God is not perfectly benevolent.

The common assumption by those who regard the present subject as embarrassed with difficulty is, that evil so far as it exists, is so much evidence against the benevolence of the Creator. It is however an assumption which in this unqualified form is flagrantly gratuitous. It is not true that the communication of good or the infliction of evil Simply

considered determines the design of its author. Good may be imparted by malevolence, and evil may be inflicted by benevolence or kindness. This remark in respect to evil is of vital importance in the present discussion, and one with which the mind should be familiar. There are two principles in respect to the existence of the evil in this world, which furnish a triumphant vindication of the divine benevolence; viz.:

First. Evil which is or which may be the necessary means of the greatest good possible to God, may be inflicted by benevolence, and is therefore no proof against his benevolence.

Secondly. Evil which is or which may be necessarily incidental (in respect to God's prevention), to that which is the necessary means of the greatest good possible to God, is no evidence that God is not benevolent.

These two principles may be illustrated by an example. A surgeon amputates the arm of a patient to save his life. There are two evils in the case. One is the loss of the arm, and this is the necessary means of the greatest good. The other is the pain or suffering which is inseparable from the operation, and this is necessarily incidental, so far as the physician's power to prevent it is concerned, to that which is the necessary means of the greatest good in the case. Now who does not see how very irrational and perverse one must be, in this view of the evils supposed, or even if he only knew that they might be such evils, to deny the kindness of the physician in this attempt to save the life of his patient.

Under these two classes, I claim that all the evil in this world may be comprised, and that therefore it does not furnish the slightest evidence against the benevolence of God. This I shall now attempt to show:

The evil in the world is natural evil and moral evil. I propose to consider --

1. Natural evil.

All natural evil may be comprised in the sufferings of infants, the sufferings of animals, and the sufferings of men as moral beings.

1. The sufferings of infants. If infants are to be considered as moral and accountable agents--a doctrine which cannot be learned from the light of nature, their case furnishes no peculiar difficulty, since on this hypothesis it cannot be shown that they suffer more than they deserve. If however they are not moral agents at this period of existence, they are soon to assume this relation with all its responsibilities, and in circumstances of powerful temptation from natural good. How far it may be useful to such beings, to know by experience what natural evil is, before accountability commences, how far such knowledge may be necessary to weaken the power of temptation by augmenting the dread of the consequences of sin, how far it may serve to restrain from desperate wickedness, and even to prevent subsequent reformation from becoming morally impossible, it does not become us to decide. Some degree of suffering inflicted by the parental hand, even previous to ill desert, is the indispensable means of teaching the child its duty, and thus securing submission to parental authority.

Be this as it may, human ignorance is not competent to assert that the sufferings of infancy are not, much less that they, cannot be, either incidental to the necessary means of the greatest good, or be themselves the necessary means of the greatest good possible to God.

2. The sufferings of animals. These also may be unavoidably incidental to the necessary means of the greatest good possible to God, or the necessary means of that good.

It is undeniable that a great proportion of the sufferings of the animal creation, is occasioned by man; and though we are prone to inquire why

they were made with such capacities of suffering, yet it is too much for human ignorance to determine, that they could answer all the purposes of their existence without these capacities. It may be true that the greatest good required that animals should be what they are, and men what they are, and that it were impossible to prevent those sufferings of the former which result from the cruelty of the latter. With respect to those sufferings which result from the fact, that different tribes of animals prey on each other, assuming that the greatest good required that they should be what they are in other respects, these sufferings may also be unavoidably incidental to their nature and condition; or this method of destruction, while some method may be required to prevent the evils of superfecundity, or to furnish that additional enjoyment that results from the succession of one race after another, may be the means of greater good in that increased happiness which is derived from this species of food, than could be produced without it. Be these things however, as they may, it is plainly too much for human ignorance to assert that the sufferings of animals may not be either the unavoidable result of the necessary means, or be themselves the necessary means of the greatest good which is possible to the Creator. Nor does it become us to decide, even on the supposition that no conceivable mode can be devised to explain the suffering of animals, which shall be consistent with the Creator's goodness to them, that no purposes can be answered by it in respect to his moral kingdom, which are worthy of his benevolence. The very mysteriousness of this providential procedure, may well heighten the awe of man toward the supreme Disposer of all. For if he inflicts such an amount of suffering on this part of his unoffending creation, what has man to expect for his provocations and crimes? What a lesson does the fact of animal suffering read to us respecting the sovereignty of the Creator? Who can say that this is not in many cases the indispensable means of convincing man that God can and will inflict suffering on him, and thus of keeping the moral universe in awe of its rightful sovereign? Without however, insisting that any of these specific suppositions accord with what is real, it is sufficient enough for my purpose, that the objector cannot show that they do not. It is enough that they may, in these and still other ways, which our minds have not conceived of, be consistent with the benevolence of the Creator. It is a case in which he might, for aught we can show to the contrary, furnish ample explanation of his goodness, and it must be shown that he cannot, or the objection from animal suffering must be abandoned.

3. The sufferings endured by men, as moral beings. These, with the sufferings of infants and animals, include the whole of natural evil. The consistency of natural evil, so far as it is endured by beings who are accountable to their Creator for their moral conduct, with his benevolence, it would seem could never be called in question, if it be remembered how much less these sufferings are than they deserve. For the most abundant goodness admits at least, that each should suffer all that he deserves. If it should here be said, that the greatest good did not require a system of moral government, and that therefore to establish it, and to inflict suffering on the transgressors of its law is not consistent with benevolence, I reply that this is a new objection, taken not from the infliction of suffering, nor from the degree of it, but from the nature of the system. In other words, the divine goodness is impeached on the ground, that God has adopted a system of moral government. This topic will presently be examined. The objection therefore now under consideration, and which is taken from the sufferings of men who are accountable for their conduct, is abandoned. And well it may be, so far as there can be any question respecting the divine goodness toward men in their individual capacity. For with what face can men who suffer immeasurably less than they deserve, complain that God is not good to them?

On the supposition, and we are authorized, after what has been said to make it, that the greatest good required this system of moral government, the sufferings of men as its accountable subjects, instead of proving that God is not good because they are so great, are proof, if of any thing, that he is not good because they are not greater. For if there be any proof from this fact, it must be that he disregards the public good, by not inflicting the full penalty of the law on transgressors. The consistency of this fact with his goodness, i.e., with his regard to the public good, has been already evinced. It is worthy of remark, that many, not to say all, writers on the present subject, have overlooked the most plausible ground of objection, viz., the deficiency of human suffering compared with human demerit, and rested their objection on the high degrees of it which exist; an objection which it would seem could be made by none but the culprit himself, and this only because he is perversely blind to the measure of his own guilt.

Besides this answer, furnished according to the first principle laid down, the second principle supplies another equally decisive. For who can doubt the necessity and utility of this influence of human sufferings? We have already shown that they are not legal sanctions, but simply paternal chastisements--corrective dispensations, whose design to recover men to virtue and to happiness cannot be unseen or unacknowledged by the most perverse. Viewed in this light, they are, as we shall show hereafter, to be ranked among the most decisive proofs of our heavenly Father's kindness toward the froward and guilty children of men. It may be said, that there are, general laws established by the Creator, which would still continue and result in great natural evil to men, were they exempt from sin; that teeth would still decay and ache, that manifold calamities, by accidents, by diseases, &c., would still be the portion of man in this world; that this shows that the sufferings which are brought on men are not the consequences of sin, but result from those laws and tendencies of things which the Creator has established, irrespectively of man's moral character.

This objection I have already had occasion to notice, though under a different bearing. It deserves however, particular notice in this application of the facts on which it rests.

In answering this objection, it is important to ascertain with as much precision as may be, how much and what kinds of evil would still befall men, were they to become perfectly and universally holy. And here it is undeniable, that if all the sufferings that result directly and indirectly from human selfishness, under all its modifications of ambition, pride, envy, avarice, lust and excess; and from all its acts in war, contest, fraud, falsehood and violence, were to cease from the earth; and if these were to be succeeded by universal benevolence, under all its modifications of kindness, forgiveness and compassion, with all the bright and inseparable train of beneficent deeds; and if with these things were to be associated that piety, which by, its confidence, its hopes, and its joys, can sustain and cheer and gladden the soul, even under the severest trials; in a word, if perfect and universal holiness were to reign on the earth,

human miseries would shrink away almost from human thought. So trivial would be our remaining sufferings, compared with the abundance of our bliss, that we could scarcely think of them, except as at most, inexplicable phenomena, for which an omniscient Creator could easily account, and which could therefore never awaken a doubt in respect to his overflowing goodness.

Nor ought it here to be forgotten what effects universal holiness would produce on the animal constitution of man, in removing its present tendencies to disease and pain--on the mental constitution, in its greater vigor and more successful activity, in its discoveries of remedies for the remaining ills of life, and of the means of improving in all respects our earthly condition. It is easy to see that these things might, not to say, would, be beyond all our present conceptions. That the world, under these causes, would approximate to its paradisiacal state of happiness, can hardly be deemed a chimerical anticipation by, any one who compares the improvements and blessings of civilized life, especially under the influence of Christianity, with a state of barbarism.

It might still be insisted, that no such diminution of human sufferings would result from these causes, as to preclude the force of the present objection, that still many of the laws of nature would continue to operate, and to produce pain, disease, and death itself. To this I would further reply, that it is not incredible that the world, and the laws of its phenomena, are formed and established by the Creator as the fit and best residence of those whose universal and perpetual sinfulness he foresaw; and that what now goes on, without change or variation, in these laws and their results, because there is no change in the human character to demand it or to render it useful, would undergo all those alterations from the hand of the Creator, which should render the world a fit residence of holy beings, should such a transformation of human character take place. Even such changes, so far as they would be requisite, would be slight, if what has been said of the benign efficacy of universal holiness be true, and might be easily effected, if not by natural causes, at least by the miraculous power of the Almighty.

Or, if this be not a satisfactory supposition, it is still remote from an incredible hypothesis, that the Being, who, as we have already shown, reveals himself so illustriously as the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, should translate to a world of perfect happiness those whose character should fit them for that exalted state of being.

But not to dismiss the objection even here. Let the facts on which it rests be conceded in their utmost extent; let it be granted, that many evils would still befall us in this world as the result of its established laws, though men universally were to become holy; that teeth would decay and ache, bones be subject to fracture and pain, and the body to disease and death; still it is quite possible, and may therefore be supposed, that this remainder of evil should be either the necessary means of a benevolent end, or inseparable from the necessary means of such an end.

It is not enough to say of this class of evils, as Dr. Paley has said, "that they are never perceived to be the object of contrivance." There is doubtless truth in his remark, and it is happily illustrated when he says, "teeth are contrived to eat, not to ache." And again--"no anatomist ever discovered a system of organization calculated to produce pain and disease; or, in explaining the parts of the human body, ever said, this is to irritate, this to inflame, &c." Though there is truth in the remark that the teeth are not contrived to ache, yet the fact falls short of the point of the objection which it is designed to meet; for the objector will ask, who made the teeth?--did not an omniscient and omnipotent God?--and why, knowing that if made they would decay and ache, did he not, as he might have done, make them so that no such evil should follow? I answer, that so far as the objection maintains that these evils could and would have been prevented by a benevolent Creator, it asserts what cannot be proved. For, allowing that the evils now adverted to would still befall men, though perfectly holy, it is not impossible that they are either the necessary means of good, or inseparable from such means. It is not incredible that even perfectly holy beings, to answer in the best manner the purposes of an immortal existence, may need to pass through a course of moral discipline, of which the experimental knowledge of natural evil shall be an indispensable part. To suffer from carelessness or

indiscretion, is eminently fitted to produce watchfulness and prudence, and may in this case be even necessary to prevent the successful assaults of temptation in the present or a future world. And even suffering, which shall be unavoidable by any means, may be indispensable to give a strength and permanence to the principle of submission to the divine will, which God could secure by no other means. But it cannot be necessary to imagine the specific forms and ways in which the evils of life now referred to may be the necessary means of a benevolent end, or inseparable from such means. According to the principles we have laid down, to show that such may be the fact, is enough to remove all the weight of this objection.

I have thus attempted to show, that the natural evil which there is in the world furnishes no evidence that God is not benevolent. The argument rests on the general and undeniable principle, that the mere existence of evil, resulting either directly or indirectly from the agency of any being, is not evidence that he is not actuated by a benevolent purpose. We have seen that evil may be inflicted from a benevolent design, and this in different ways, or on different principles. We have seen also, that all the natural evil which there is in the world, for aught we know or can prove to the contrary, may be inflicted according to some one or more of these principles, from a benevolent design on the part of the Creator. Why then should this evil be alleged as proof that he is not benevolent? Is not chastisement dictated by love, and are its sufferings properly alleged as proof of unkindness? and though we cannot say that all the natural evil in the world either is or maybe placed in this category, yet we say that it may be as truly the dictate of kindness as the corrections of a father's hand. In this view of the subject, we may conclude that the existence of natural evil is absolutely NO EVIDENCE that the present system, with its results, is not the best system possible to God. It may therefore be the best system possible to God, notwithstanding the existence of natural evil.

LECTURE IX: Objection from the existence of moral evil.

Third leading proposition continued viz.: God governs with rightful

authority. -- God is benevolent, because the present system may be the best possible. -- Objection from the existence of moral evil. -- There may be an impossibility, in the nature of things, that it should be prevented. Assuming that a moral system may be the best, 1. It may be impossible to prevent all sin under a moral system--2. If this is not true, it may be impossible under the best moral system.

IN the last lecture, I commenced the argument in support of the benevolence of God by proposing to show,

That the present system may be not only better than none, but the best possible to the Creator.

In that lecture I considered the objection to the divine benevolence, derived from the existence of natural evil. I now propose to consider that which is derived from the existence and prevalence of moral evil.

This is justly esteemed the principal objection. It is demanded, if natural evil is a necessary and useful consequence of moral evil, why did not God prevent moral evil? Why did he not adopt, as he might have done, a moral system, which should result in the perfect and endless holiness and happiness of his moral creation; at least one which should have prevented the present extensive prevalence of moral evil? Or, if this was impossible, then it may be demanded again, why adopt a moral system at all; or, if he could not adopt a moral system, nor any other which should be better than none, then why adopt any system of creation?

This I think, is the objection derived from the existence and prevalence of moral evil in its full force. And it is obvious that it derives all its plausibility from the single assumption, that God, either by adopting a different system from the present, or none at all, could have done better than he has done. It is equally obvious, that fully and fairly to meet this objection,

it is sufficient to show that the present system, notwithstanding the existence and prevalence of moral evil, may be not only better than none, but the best possible to the Creator. For if it may be true, then there is no evidence or proof to the contrary, and none is authorized to assert it. Of course the objection is groundless, and must be abandoned.

That the present system may be better than none, I shall for the present take for granted, and this for two reasons; one is, that in view of the excess of happiness over misery in the world, the possibility that the present system is better than none can scarcely be supposed to need proof; the other is, that I shall hereafter have occasion to prove that it is better than none. Indeed, I have adverted to this part of the objection rather as what might be said, than as what has been or is likely to be strongly urged. It is important however to show in this part of the discussion, that the present system, notwithstanding the existence of moral evil, may be the best possible system to the Creator.

By the word system, or the phrase moral system, must be meant all that which results in moral action, or in any way determines it to be what it is, including the nature of the moral beings themselves, and all the influences under which they act as such beings. The system must thus be distinguished from its results in moral action, as a cause from its effect, and thus be viewed as not including either sin or holiness as any part of the system under which they exist.

Some who maintain that the present system not only may be, but is the best possible to the Creator, attempt to show, that the reason that God does not prevent moral evil under it, is not that there is any impossibility in the nature of this moral system, or of any moral system, that he should prevent it; but that the moral evil which exists, is the necessary means of the greatest good. When it is said, that there is no impossibility that God should prevent all sin under the present system, the meaning must be, either that he can prevent it by some changes which would not impair its essential nature, or by direct interpositions of his power on the mind, thus leaving the nature of the system wholly unchanged in every other

respect.

In opposition to this theory, it is now maintained that there may be an impossibility, in the nature of things, that God should prevent all sin under any moral system whatever, and the present degree of moral evil under the best moral system; and that therefore moral evil in its present degree may exist, not because it is the necessary means of the greatest good, but because, in respect to divine prevention, it is incidental to a moral system, which is not only better than no system, but the best possible to the Creator.

The former of these theories has, in my own view, been so fully abandoned, even by its professed advocates in recent controversy, that I shall not here attempt a full exposure of its intrinsic absurdities and obvious inconsistencies with acknowledged truths. I propose to notice it only as it may come in my way, in defending the theory which I adopt.

If it can be shown, that there may be an impossibility in the nature of things, that God should prevent all moral evil under a moral system, and the present degree of moral evil under the best moral system, then it will follow, that the moral evil under the present system may exist; because, in respect to divine prevention, it is incidental to one which is not only better than none, but the best possible to the Creator, and is therefore no evidence against his perfect benevolence.

Before I proceed directly to sustain this theory, I deem it important to remark, that no prejudice against it ought to be entertained by the disciples, and especially by the advocates of Christianity. It has often been said, that the existence of moral evil under the government of a perfect God, is a profound, unsolvable mystery, and that it has hitherto baffled the research of the most powerful minds in every age. Hence we are often met with the reproofing interrogatory, why not let it alone? I answer, first, because the enemies of truth will not let it alone; and for the defenders of truth to shun the inquiry, is to abandon it without a defense,

and to concede, in the field of argument, a complete triumph to Universalism, to Deism, and to Atheism. When the universalist reasons thus: God is infinitely good, and therefore disposed to make all his creatures holy and happy forever; he is omnipotent, and can secure this result, and therefore most certainly will secure it; and when, on the basis of this conclusion, he forces the doctrine of endless punishment, by false interpretation from the sacred page--when the infidel, from the same premises, comes to the same conclusion respecting the holiness and happiness of God's moral creation, and either because he has more sense or candor than the former, admits that this doctrine of future punishment is plainly taught in the Scriptures, and, for this very reason, denies that a benevolent God is the author of the book; and when the atheist, on the supposition of a benevolent and an omnipotent God, infers that there could be no evil, and because there is evil, denies the existence of such a being, it is in vain, and worse than in vain, to cry out "mystery," in refutation of the argument. Such men as Voltaire and Hume, and multitudes of far inferior discernment, know that this is not reasoning. Their reply is, we knew that you could not answer; and they despise you for holding opinions which you are confessedly unable to defend. But further; the inquiry concerning the origin of moral evil is not to be avoided, for the Bible has not shunned it. Indeed, it would seem incredible that it should. Who can believe that Christianity has been given to the world, exposed to an objection which is incapable of all refutation, and which undermines not only its divine origin, but theism itself? It has not. Its divine author has formally stated and fully solved the great problem, whence cometh moral evil? He has solved it for the instruction not merely of philosophers, but of the people, and on substantially the same principle on which it is now proposed to solve it by reason. This he has done with unsurpassed perspicuity and force, in "the parable of the tares of the field." In this parable we are taught the following truths:

1st. That the kingdom--the reign of heaven--the moral government of God under a gracious economy--is perfectly fitted to its great design of reforming and saving all men.

2d. That the fact that there are wicked men, or that there is moral evil,

rather than its opposite, under this best system, is in direct contravention of this great design of its divine author.

3d. That the reason that moral evil exists, is that there is an impossibility, in the nature of, the case, that God should prevent it, under the system, which exempts him from all responsibility in respect to its existence; and

4th. That the interpositions requisite to remove the evil, would do more hurt than good, by diminishing the amount of holiness under the system.

Here then we have the same solution of the problem whence cometh moral evil, which is now proposed with only this difference, that what the Saviour teaches as a fact, a doctrine, is now for a particular purpose in argument, proposed merely as a theory or possible truth. Why should such a theory be encountered with prejudice on the part of the friends and advocates of Christianity?

I now proceed to show on the principles of reason, that --

There may be an impossibility in the nature of things, that God should prevent all sin or moral evil under the best system.

Assuming what will probably not be denied, that a moral system may be the best system, I propose to show:

1. That there may be an impossibility that God should prevent all sin under a moral system; and
2. That if it be possible, that he should prevent all sin under any moral system, there may be an impossibility that he should prevent all sin under the best moral system.

1. There may be, an impossibility in the nature of things, that God should prevent all sin under any moral system whatever.

That such an impossibility may exist, is evident from the nature of a moral system, for it necessarily includes the existence of moral beings; and sin or moral evil cannot be prevented in moral beings, by any power or influence which destroys their moral agency. To suppose this, is to suppose sin to be prevented in moral beings who are not moral beings. But moral agency implies free agency--the power of choice the power to choose morally wrong as well as morally right, under every possible influence to prevent such choice or action. Moral agency and of course moral beings can no more exist without this power, than matter can exist without solidity and extension, or a triangle without sides and angles. Let it then be kept in mind that I now speak of preventing sin in moral beings, free moral agents, who can sin under every possible influence from God to prevent their sinning. But if such beings do what in this respect they can do under every possible influence from God to prevent their sinning, they certainly will sin when it is impossible that God should prevent their sinning. And why may it not be so? Who knows or who can prove, that such cases will not occur under any possible moral system? No man knows nor can prove it. Therefore let no man assert it. There may be an impossibility that God should prevent all sin or moral evil under any moral system. The assumption that God can prevent all moral evil in a moral system, is wholly groundless and unauthorized, and the objection to his benevolence, derived from the existence of moral evil, which rests entirely on this assumption, is also groundless, and ought to be abandoned.

I do not say that there is an impossibility that God should prevent all sin under a moral system; nor even that it may not be true that there is not such an impossibility; but I affirm. simply, that there may be. This is sufficient for my present purpose, that of answering the objection to the divine benevolence, derived from the existence of moral evil. For on this supposition, moral evil under the present system, in respect to divine prevention, may be incidental to a system which may be not only better

than none, but the best possible to the Creator; and is therefore no proof against his benevolence.

Here this grand objection to the benevolence of God might be left as fully refuted. But many things may be said to strengthen the objection and to weaken the force of the reply to it, which has now been made.

These things may be comprised in alleging that the supposed theory is inconsistent with the omnipotence of God, and in supposed proofs, that God can prevent all sin in a moral system.

In the first place, it is often alleged that to suppose that there may be any impossibility that God should prevent all sin in a moral system, is highly dishonorable to God, inasmuch as it virtually denies his power as an omnipotent Being. The plausibility of this gratuitous assumption is such to most minds, through want of reflection, that it has perplexed the argument for God's benevolence more than every other consideration. In reply to this, I claim in the first place that they who assert that any impossibility that God should prevent all moral evil under a moral system, is inconsistent with his omnipotence, should either prove the assertion or retract it. What right has any one in reasoning to assert what he neither knows nor can prove to be true? Who does not know that there is a kind of impossibility in many cases, which God has no power to remove or overcome. It is impossible that God should cause a thing to be and not to be at the same time, that he should make two and two to be five, or a part equal to the whole. There is an impossibility to God in each of these cases which involves a contradiction. Reminding the objector of what every tyro in reasoning knows that this kind of impossibility limits the power of God in such a sense as fully to justify us in denying his power in such cases, let him address himself to an argument showing that the same kind of impossibility does not exist in the case now under consideration. When he shall do this, we shall begin to suspect that his present objection to our theory is something more than either designed or undesigned sophistry. I reply again to this assertion with a denial of its truth. The impossibility now supposed of God's preventing all sin under a

moral system, if it be real, is not inconsistent with his omnipotence. It is not that kind of impossibility which is given by a direct conflict between the power of the creature and the power of God, because the power of the creature to sin is superior to God's power. Such a direct conflict between the power of moral beings to sin and God's power, is as inconceivable as that the forces which produce the motion of the planets should be interfered with by the power of motives or arguments. The direct prevention of sin, or which is the same thing, the direct production of holiness in moral agents by dint of Omnipotence, is an absurdity, inasmuch as it implies that God is the efficient, proximate natural cause of their moral acts, and that they act morally without acting as moral agents, i.e., without being the proximate, efficient causes of their own acts. What then is the impossibility of God's preventing all sin in moral beings, which it is now supposed may exist? I answer: It is an impossibility, the supposition of which involves a contradiction in the nature of the case. It is the impossibility of God's preventing moral beings from sinning by any thing which he can do, when beings who can sin in despite of God, do in this respect what they can do. To suppose that in such cases they should be prevented from sinning, is to suppose them to sin and to be prevented from sinning at the same time, which is a contradiction and an impossibility. And would such an impossibility if it exists, dishonorably limit the power of God? Would it imply the want of any degree of that power which constitutes omnipotence? Must we then, if we could duly honor God, assert that he has power to accomplish contradictions, or to accomplish that, which for aught that can be shown to the contrary, may involve a contradiction and an impossibility in the nature of things--assert that to be true of God which for aught that can be known or proved to the contrary, may be false? Is God honored by the confident assertions of mere ignorance, and on such a basis is either his goodness or his omnipotence to be denied? Plainly if the supposed impossibility of God's preventing all moral evil under a moral system actually exists, it no more dishonorably limits his power than the impossibility that the act should be prevented and not prevented at the same time, or than two and two should be five, or a part equal to the whole.

It is also to be said, that the doctrine that sin is the necessary means of

the greatest good, denies the power of God in the same sense as that in which the theory now maintained can be said to deny it. According to this doctrine God cannot--he has not power to secure the greatest good, without sin as the means of this end. It limits the Holy One of Israel by the impossibility of securing good, which results from the nature of Bin; for it assigns this impossibility as the very reason for the existence of sin. Thus on both schemes, an impossibility in the nature of things is involved. In the one case it is maintained that there may be an impossibility of God's preventing all moral evil under a moral system, resulting from the nature of moral agency as involving power to sin under every possible influence to prevent it; in the other, that there is an impossibility that God should produce the greatest good without sin, resulting from the nature of sin as the necessary means of the greatest good.

If either theory is true, God may be properly said to be limited by an impossibility in the nature of things. And which is the most dishonorable to him, the supposition that he cannot produce the greatest good without sin as the means of it; or that he cannot prevent that, the prevention of which may involve a contradiction--i.e., he cannot prevent beings from sinning who can sin in despite of his power to prevent them? The former is utterly absurd and inconceivable. For how can it be impossible that God should produce the greatest good by the best kind of moral action. Or how can it be true that he cannot produce the greatest good without that kind of moral action, which is fitted to destroy all good and to produce all evil? How can that which is confessedly wholly an evil, only an evil--an evil without qualification, be the necessary means of the greatest good? How can the worst kind of action conceivable, be the best kind of action? If not, then how can it be impossible that God should produce the greatest good without sin as the means of it? Plainly the supposition of such an impossibility is the most palpable of all impossibilities. There can be no such. If then, one of the supposed impossibilities must exist, shall we suppose it to be that which may or that which cannot exist.

Further; there is no conceivable theory by which the benevolence and omnipotence of God--in other words, by which the existence of a perfect

God can be vindicated, without supposing an impossibility in some respect that he should prevent moral evil, which is consistent with his benevolence and his omnipotence, and which is the reason of his not preventing it. The most plausible argument ever devised in defence of Atheism is probably that of Epicurus. This argument, when applied to moral evil, is substantially the following: "God either would prevent all moral evil, and could not; or he could prevent it, and would not; or he neither would nor could prevent it; or he both would and could prevent it. If he would and could not, then he is not omnipotent; if he would not and could, then he is not good; if he neither would nor could, then he is neither good nor omnipotent; if he both would and could, then moral evil would not exist. But moral evil does exist. Therefore there is no God who is both good and omnipotent." Now where lies the fallacy of this boasted argument? an argument which in some form has been often repeated in triumph even to the present day. There are two assumptions in this argument, one of which is fully authorized; the other is wholly unauthorized. The former is that moral evil is not the necessary means of the greatest good, but is wholly an evil; for if it be the necessary means of the greatest good, it would not be, as is claimed in this argument, inconsistent with the divine goodness. This assumption is fully authorized; for how can the worst kind of moral action conceivable, be the best kind of moral action? The other, is the assumption that if God cannot prevent all moral evil under any and every created system, then he is not omnipotent; for if there may be an impossibility that God should prevent all moral evil under a moral system, or under the best system, which impossibility is consistent with his omnipotence, then the fact that he cannot prevent it, is no proof that he is not omnipotent; while if there can be no such impossibility, then God as both good and omnipotent would prevent all moral evil. But he does not, and it follows therefore from the present assumption, that if God is good he is not omnipotent. Indeed the existing moral evil being wholly an evil, must be supposed to exist, either because if God is good, he is not omnipotent; or because if he is omnipotent, he is not good, or because he is neither omnipotent nor good; or because there is an impossibility of his preventing the evil, which impossibility is consistent with his goodness and his omnipotence. Thus we are driven by unanswerable reasoning either into blank Atheism, or into the admission of some impossibility of God's preventing all moral evil, which impossibility is consistent with his goodness and his omnipotence. Such an impossibility may result as we claim, from any

moral system, or at least from the best system. The assumption then that there can be no such impossibility, or that if God cannot prevent all moral evil under any, even under the best system, then he is not omnipotent, is unauthorized; and constitutes the fallacy of the foregoing argument for Atheism,

It is here worthy of remark, that the advocates of the doctrine, that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good, while they advance in so doing that which is palpably absurd, also maintain the groundless assumption of the atheistic argument. To vindicate the goodness of God, they maintain the palpable absurdity--, that what is wholly an evil is the necessary means of the greatest good; and to vindicate his omnipotence, that there is no impossibility of his preventing all moral evil under any moral system whatever. They thus give their sanction to a principle which by just reasoning sustains downright Atheism. For if sin is, and who does not know it is, wholly an evil, and if there is no sense in which God cannot prevent it under the present system consistently with his omnipotence, then in view of the existing sin it follows either that God is not good or not omnipotent, or that he is neither good nor omnipotent.

But it is claimed, that there is the most decisive proof that God can prevent all sin, under any moral system whatever.

1. It is said, that as an omnipotent Being, he must have power to direct and control the conduct of his creatures as he pleases, or according to his will. By the will of God must here be meant, either his will as a lawgiver, in which he prefers, all things considered, that right moral action should (not shall) take place in all cases, rather than wrong; or, his providential will--his decree--in which he purposes that the event willed shall take place. If the former will be meant, then it is not admitted that God has power to control the conduct of his creatures, in all cases, according to that will. It is undeniable, that he does not in all cases; while it is equally so, that as benevolent and omnipotent, he would thus, control it, were there no impossibility of his so doing, consistent with his benevolence and omnipotence. Such an impossibility is of course not

inconsistent with these attributes. If by the will of God, he meant his providential will--his decree--then I deny that he has such a will to prevent the sin which actually takes place. Foreseeing the certainty of the sin, he could not will nor purpose actually to prevent it; but, on the contrary, must, rather than prevent it by destroying moral agency, or for some other reason, have purposed its actual existence. God therefore, whatever may be his will as a lawgiver, has no will or purpose that any sin shall not take place, which does take place. He has power actually to direct and control, as he wills actually to direct and control, the conduct of his creatures, and of course, power to bring to pass whatsoever he wills shall come to pass.

2. It is often said, that it is incredible, that God should not be able to prevent all sin in moral beings by the influence of motives. I answer, that if there may be such an impossibility, then such an impossibility is not incredible. Indeed, why is it incredible that God should not be able, by motives, to prevent beings from sinning, who possess power to sin under all possible motives which he can employ to prevent them.

3. It may be said, that God can create moral beings of such a nature as shall certainly prevent their sinning. If by "such a nature," be meant what some mean, viz., a holy nature as a constitutional property of the beings, I deny that such a nature can be literally created by God. To suppose holiness to exist in a creature of God, prior to all voluntary exercise or act on the part of the creature, is to suppose holiness to exist before it exists, which is absurd. In short, whatever nature God may be supposed to create in moral beings, they must have power to act morally wrong, under every preventing influence from God. And who can prove that such beings will not act morally wrong, and that it may not be impossible that God should prevent it?

4. The appeal is often made to facts. It is said, that God does and can prevent some moral beings from sinning; and if he can prevent some, he can prevent all. This is a palpable non sequitur. All moral beings have the power to avoid sinning, as well as power to sin. That some, who have the

power to avoid sinning, should be prevented from sinning, is indeed altogether credible. But why is it not also, that it should be impossible for God to prevent some from sinning, who have power to sin under every possible preventing influence. To deny such impossibility, is "talking quite at random, and in the dark." Besides, there are no known instances of the prevention of sin in moral beings, except under a system in which others have not been prevented. And how do the facts alleged, prove that God could have prevented all sin, either under the present moral system or under any other? Nor could the sin of any who have sinned, have been prevented by God without some changes and interpositions for the purpose. Those requisite to prevent one sin, and especially to prevent all the sin which has taken place, supposing the system in other respects to be the same, might, in despite of future preventing interpositions, have resulted in more sin than could have been prevented. To assert therefore that God might have prevented all sin in a moral system, or in any moral system, is to make mere arbitrary assertions, no man knowing enough of possibilities in the case, to adduce the shadow of proof of the truth of what he asserts.

5. But the objector may appeal (and I readily consent that he should) to the facts of revelation. He may speak of angels, who have never sinned and never will, and of the redeemed in heaven, who never will. But revelation brings to our knowledge neither angels nor men confirmed in holiness, except those who are confirmed under a moral system in which sin takes place. And who can show that any changes requisite to prevent the sin which has taken place, supposing that such changes might have been made, would not have resulted ultimately in a vast increase of sin? It may be said, that our first parents were for a time holy, and that, had their circumstances been continued exactly the same, they would have continued holy; for the same antecedents would have been followed with the same consequent. I answer, that it is impossible, in the nature of things, that the antecedents should continue exactly the same. When they had lived one day or hour in obedience to the divine will, some things were necessarily true of them which were not when they had thus lived but half a day, or half an hour. One change in the antecedents might lead to another. In the progress of their being, how many thoughts and feelings--what diversified associations and excitement of constitutional

propensities would arise, which never occurred during the short period of their continued obedience! And if none but the omniscient Being could foresee these things, then who but he can pronounce on the result?

6. If the objector should still insist, that a God of infinite wisdom and power might have devised and adopted a moral system which would have excluded all moral evil, then I ask, what moral system? Can he specify it? Can he delineate minutely its essential, constituent elements?-the exact nature and degree of influence it must possess, that it may be effectual to prevent all moral evil? Could any thing be more presumptuous and audacious than such an attempt? And if he does not know what moral system, or that any moral system would be effectual to the prevention of all moral evil under it, how does he know that God could devise such a system? I am not saying that he could not; but I affirm, that no one can prove that he could. The fact that moral beings can sin under any and every preventing influence from God, forever precludes the possibility of proving a priori, that they will not, and that there may not be an impossibility that God should prevent all moral evil under a moral system. It may be, that, had the nature of man, or his circumstances, or both, been different in any respect from what they are, or had any other influence in kind or degree been resorted to than has been, the system in other respects being the same, then the consequence, in despite of any and all further preventing interpositions, would have been an immeasurably greater amount of moral evil than has resulted, or will result from the present system. Had the powers of man been greater than they are; had he commenced existence with the more perfect faculties of manhood; had his susceptibilities, propensities, circumstances, been in any manner different, the results in moral evil, for aught we know or can prove to the contrary, would have been vastly worse than those of the present system as it is. Under the imagined change for the better, still man might have sinned. To sin in circumstances more favorable to virtue, might imply greater strength in the sinful principle or purpose, formed in resistance of the greater obligations and motives to virtue--even a desperation which would render vain all efforts to reclaim; which would prevent a rendering useless, an economy of grace, and thus result in universal and hopeless sin and woe.

7. Should the objector still insist, that some changes might have been adopted by an all-wise and omnipotent Creator, which would have prevented the present prevalence of moral evil, I ask, what changes? Does he say, greater force of intellect, and consequently more just and adequate views of the nature and relations of the great objects of moral choice would have secured the end? I reply, that men do not sin through any such deficiency in this faculty of the soul, as to show, that to augment its strength, would change the result in practice. Besides, any finite strength of intellect is consistent with power to sin, and cannot therefore be alleged as proof that the subject of it will not sin.

8. Is it then said, that greater strength of intellect, and a diminished strength of the propensities to natural good, would secure the result; I reply, that however vigorous the intellectual perceptions, and however weak the propensities to natural good, so long as the latter are real, and such as are essential to moral agency, they must be capable of an excitement which shall render possible the choice of their gratification, since otherwise moral agency could not exist. It is impossible therefore to prove a priori, that such a moral agent will not sin.

9. Is it then said by the objector, that if sin were to be followed with the immediate execution of its curse on the transgressor, this would certainly diminish the degree of moral evil in the world? I answer, that the consequences might be immeasurably worse. Indeed, when we reflect that mankind actually possess sufficient intellectual capacity to perceive the difference between right and wrong moral action, and the infinite preponderance of motive to the former compared with the pleasures of sin, and think of the universal sinfulness of our race, the presumption rests on no slight basis, that to make this world a place of immediate retribution, would be to change it, with all its bright prospects from a state of trial, into a world of desperation in sin and suffering. In such a system, one sin would cut off all hope of the divine favor; and who could decide that all would not sin once? Thus the amount of moral evil might far surpass what now exists, and this world, instead of being a place of probation, cheered with intimations of mercy and forgiveness, might become the theater of retributive vengeance to all.

10. Should the objector propose any other emendation of the system, it would be equally nugatory. No one is competent to devise or suggest a change, which he, or any other man, can pronounce to be an improvement, without the most palpable presumption. To show how utterly groundless are all objections to the present system, derived from the existence of moral evil, we need only remark, that the present state of man is, or at least may be, one of moral discipline, in reference to the formation of his moral character for immortality; that it is, or at least may be, peculiarly fitted to give stability to moral principle, and thus to secure ultimately immutable moral perfection in man; and that every thing which pertains to it, as a system from God, may be indispensably necessary to secure the greatest amount of holiness and happiness to the universe which God can secure. Who then shall say, or be respected for saying, that any change in the system which he can devise or suggest, would improve it? Who would take the responsibility of effecting, if he could, the least alteration in the system which the supreme Creator has adopted?

11. After all, the objector may say, if man cannot devise a system of greater perfection than the present, this is no proof that the Creator, a being of infinite perfection, cannot. I reply, that this is a mere evasion of the point at issue. My object has not been to prove that the Creator could not have devised and adopted a better system than the present; though I may hereafter show that we have good reason to believe that he could not; but to show that it cannot be proved that God could have adopted a better system than the present--that it may be true, so far as existing evil is concerned, that he could not, and that the assertion that he could, is presumptuous in the extreme. Hence the objection to God's benevolence derived from the existence of moral evil and therefore from natural evil, and which is designed to show that the present system is not the best possible to the Creator, being founded wholly in the ignorance of the objector, is to be laid entirely aside as nugatory and vain. The conclusion is, that it may be impossible that God should exclude all moral evil from a moral system; and of course from the best moral system; and that therefore, great as the amount of moral evil is under the present system, it may be the best possible to the Creator.

Some theologians however, instead of receiving the theory as now presented, have proposed a modification of it, maintaining that while God can prevent all sin under some moral system, it may be true that he cannot prevent all sin under the best moral system. More particularly they maintain that the present system may be the best, inasmuch as it comprises those high degrees of temptation and other moral means, which while they become the sure occasion of the sin of some, are necessary to secure higher degrees of holiness on the part of others, and thus higher degrees of happiness on the whole, than God could secure under some other system, under which he could prevent all sin.

My objection to this modification of the theory already presented, is not that it asserts that it may be true that God cannot prevent sin under the best moral system. That this may be true, I assert and maintain. But my objection is twofold; viz., the theory asserts that God can prevent all sin under some moral system; and that it affirms certain specific or particular characteristics of the present moral system as those which may constitute it the best system, when there is much reason for believing that they do not.

I proceed then to say:

First. That the affirmation that God can prevent all sin under some moral system, is gratuitous and unauthorized. I know no advocate of this part of the theory, who has attempted to prove the affirmation that God can prevent all sin under some moral system. I admit that it may be true that he can; but claim to have shown that it may be true that he cannot. If there is no proof either that God can or that he cannot prevent all sin under any moral system whatever, then the affirmation, that he can prevent all sin under some moral system, is wholly unauthorized. Besides when it is once admitted that God cannot prevent all sin under a moral system which is the best, how can it be shown that he can prevent all sin under a moral system which is not the best? May it not be true for aught that appears to the contrary, that God cannot prevent all sin under any

other moral system, as well as that he cannot under the best moral system? Is not the assertion then that God can prevent all sin under some moral system, altogether unauthorized? Is there any evidence or proof that the assertion is true rather than false? Secondly. There is not only no proof that the higher degrees of temptation with other moral means, which are supposed to be essential to the best system, are necessary to secure or will secure the highest degrees of holiness, but much evidence to the contrary. How does it appear that a moral being cannot love God with all his heart, mind, soul and strength, i.e., as much as he can love him, under a low as well as under a high degree of temptation, or as well under one system of means, as under another? How can it be shown that a moral being can or will love God more than he can--more than with all his strength, because temptation is great? Can it be shown that his strength will be increased as temptation is increased? And if this cannot be shown, how can it be rendered in the lowest degree probable that the greater the temptation to sin, the greater will be the degree of holiness? On the contrary, if there is any principle to be reasoned from in the case, it is that the greater the degree of temptation to sin, other things being the same, the less will be the degree of holiness. It is on this very principle that orthodox divines as a class, account for the universal depravity of unrenewed men, and the low degree of holiness in those who are renewed. They trace these results to the high degree of temptation which arises from their propensity to sin. Is it a uniform fact that the increase of temptation results in the increase of holiness? Is temptation a means of grace? Or is it to be received as a general principle, that if good men would be perfect in holiness, they must shun temptation? There is plainly a strong probability then, against the supposition, that to increase the degree of temptation should increase the degree of holiness. But for the sake of the argument, let it be conceded that such would be the result of high degrees of temptation in respect to a part of the subjects of a moral system; how does it appear that what would thus be gained in holiness and happiness by them, would not be more than overbalanced by greater decrees of sin and misery to another? If it be said that it may not be so, the answer is, that it may be so, and there is no evidence that it would not be so, not to say, the probability is, that it would be so. Thirdly. There can be no proof that God can prevent all sin under a moral system, or that having adopted a moral system, he can prevent all sin without destroying moral agency. Suppose what is called the best system of means and measures to be

adopted, God either can or he cannot prevent all sin under this system, and of course without destroying moral agency. If he can prevent all sin under this best moral system, and this by the mere exertion of his power, without at all changing the system of means, and of course without destroying moral agency, why? does he not thus prevent all sin? Would an omnipotent being in such a case deprecate the requisite interposition of his power? Why then as a benevolent and an omnipotent being, does he not interpose his power, and thus prevent all sin and secure perfect holiness and happiness forever under this best system of means and measures? Is it said that sin itself is the necessary means of the greatest good? But this preposterous dogma the advocate of this theory rejects. Can any reason then be given why God, having adopted the best system does not prevent all sin, except that he cannot without destroying moral agency? Is it said that to prevent all sin by the supposed interposition of power, would be preventing it "in such a way as would derange and impair the best possible system of means?" But the system of means according to the supposition, is unchanged. It remains the same in all that gives it excellence, or constitutes it the best system of means, whether sin be prevented in the manner supposed or not. Why then is not all sin prevented by the supposed interposition of divine power? Is it laid that it may be true that to prevent all sin and to secure universal and perfect holiness and happiness forever by this method, would lessen the amount of holiness and happiness compared with what would otherwise exist? Be it so. But it may also be true that such would not be the effect; and the reason that God does not prevent all sin may be another; viz., that he cannot without destroying moral agency. Besides, the thing supposed, viz., that God should prevent all sin under the system, and by so doing lessen the comparative amount of holiness, is impossible. To suppose less holiness than perfect holiness or the highest possible, to be the effect of the supposed divine interposition, is to suppose less holiness than ought to be, which is sin; and surely God cannot be supposed to adopt a method of preventing all sin which will produce sin! Is it then said that God cannot prevent all sin and secure universal and perfect holiness forever under the best system, merely by the direct interposition of his power? Be it so. Then the question returns, how does it appear that he can prevent all sin forever under any moral system, that is, prevent it forever without destroying moral agency? By doing this he can prevent all sin. How does it appear that he can prevent it, if he introduces a moral system without destroying moral agency? It is admitted that it may be

true that God cannot prevent all sin under the best moral system. Why may it not be true that the very reason that he cannot, is that he cannot prevent all sin, having adopted any moral system, without destroying moral agency? And if this may be the reason that he cannot prevent all sin. under the best moral system, why may it not be a reason that he cannot under any other system which is not the best? Adopt what moral system he may, the possibility of sinning which is given by moral agency in despite of divine power to prevent it remains, and excludes all proof that sin will not take place under the system. No man therefore can either know or prove, that there is any way in which God can prevent all sin if he adopts a moral system, unless he destroys moral agency.

I now proceed to show as I proposed:

2. That if it be conceded that God can prevent all moral evil under some possible moral system, it may still be impossible that he should prevent all moral evil, even the present degree of moral evil under the best moral system.

I do not say that conceding the former, the latter would be probable. Still it may be true, that were God to adopt the system under which he could prevent all moral evil, either on account of the small numbers of beings which the system would require, or on account of their limited capacity, or for some other reason, he would greatly lessen the happiness of his creation compared with adopting another system under which he cannot prevent all moral evil. The present moral system as consisting of a given number of moral beings, and possessing exactly the nature, the powers, susceptibilities, propensities which they do possess, and placed in exactly the circumstances in which they are placed--for aught that appears to the contrary, may be the only system by means of which God can produce the highest happiness which he can produce.

Any other system, which would prevent the existing degree of moral evil--if such a system be possible--might greatly impair the results in

happiness, as these depend, not indeed on the existence of moral evil as the means of happiness, but on the nature of the moral system itself; that is, on the number and nature, the powers and capacities of the beings, and the various kinds of influence and sources of happiness which the best moral system includes. There may then be an impossibility, not indeed that God should produce the greatest good without the existing moral evil as the means of it, but that he should prevent the existing moral evil under the present system. Moral beings, under this best moral system, must have power to sin, in despite of all that God can do under this system to prevent them; and to suppose that they should do what they, can under this system, viz., sin, and that God should prevent their sinning, is a contradiction and an impossibility. It may be true that such beings, in this respect, will do what they can do--that is, will sin--when of course it would be impossible that God, other things remaining the same, should prevent their sinning without destroying their moral agency. Granting then the possibility, that God should prevent all sin under some moral system, still it may be impossible that he should do it, without either adopting some other system of means than the best, or, having adopted the best, without destroying it by destroying moral agency.

In opposition to this conclusion however, there are some who will still reply, that "with God, all things are possible;" that, as an omnipotent being, he can prevent all sin under one system of means and measures as well as under another, even as well without means as with; that he can prevent all sin in moral beings, by the direct and immediate interpositions of mere omnipotence--by mere dint of power--by acts of literal creation, producing holiness in all.

It is readily admitted, that in the true sense of the language, "All things are possible with God." But what are often and properly called things in one sense, cannot be properly called things in another. In the most general sense, any mere object of thought is properly called a thing. Of these objects there are two classes. The one class are things (thought--things) which are not real, and those which are not possible; while the other class are things which are either real or possible. Thus to make two and two equal to five, is impossible. Does it then imply any deficiency of

power in God, that he cannot make, two and two equal to five? No more does it imply any deficiency in power on his part, that he cannot prevent, in supposable cases, beings who can sin, in despite of his power, i.e., moral beings from sinning, under the best moral system. In the nature of things, there may be an impossibility which involves a contradiction. If such impossibilities limit the power of God, or are inconsistent with his omnipotence, who can believe or assert his omnipotence? When it is said, that "with God all things are possible," who can suppose that the all things includes things which involve contradiction and impossibility in their very nature, and infer that God can make two and two to be five, or the diameter of a circle to be equal to its circumference, or can prevent beings in all cases from sinning, who can sin, under every preventing influence from him?

Is it then said, that God, as an omnipotent being, can prevent all sin under one moral system as well as under another as well without means as with? Then I ask, why can he not secure any other result without means as well as with?--why can he not secure the greatest good, without sin as the means of it; and if he can, how is sin the necessary means of this end? If it is limiting the power of God to suppose that he cannot accomplish his designs without means, then it is limiting his power to assert that he cannot secure the greatest good without sin as the means. It is wholly unsupported by facts; for in what instance has God ever prevented sin in a moral being, without means? It is absurd and self-contradictory. If sin be prevented in moral beings, it must be prevented by their acting, and acting morally right, in view of motives. Is it then said, that God can prevent all sin in moral beings by any degree of motives, and especially by that degree which is comprised in the best moral system? But who knows, or can prove this, who is authorized to assert it? No one. The assertion is wholly arbitrary, and he who makes it knows not whether he asserts truth or falsehood. That system of means and measures, which is necessary to the greatest good which God can secure, may be inconsistent with God's preventing all moral evil under the system. According to this view, sin is wholly an evil--evil in all its tendencies; and still God permits and purposes its existence, rather than not adopt the best moral system. As the husbandman does not sow good seed in his field for the sake of the tares, i.e., because he prefers tares to

wheat; but notwithstanding the tares, which he may foresee will come in among the wheat, and for the sake of the good, which will still far overbalance the evil; so God may have adopted the present moral system, not for the sake of the sin, or of any good of which it is the means, but notwithstanding the evil, and for the sake of the overbalancing good, of which the system is the necessary means.

After all, the great question, concerning the goodness and the power of God, which results from the existence of moral evil under his government, depends not so much on either of the particular theories which have now been propounded, in preference to the other, as on an assumption which is opposed to both, viz., that God can prevent all moral evil under any moral system whatever, by the direct and immediate interpositions of mere power. It is this which is relied upon in common by atheists, deists, universalists, and a large class of orthodox divines, in their reasonings on the subject. We have seen how this assumption, in connection with other premises, leads to Atheism, Infidelity, and Universalism; and also how utterly feeble and insufficient is the defence of the orthodox against these errors, while they admit its truth. So long as this assumption is made and conceded--so long as it is admitted that God, by the mere interpositions of his power, can prevent all moral evil under any moral system whatever, the problem, why does he not prevent it, will remain incapable of solution. Nor can it be thought strange, that one class of minds, in view of existing moral evil, should deny the existence of a being of boundless goodness and power; that another should deny, that the book which asserts the endless sin and misery of multitudes of our race is a revelation from a perfect God; that another, receiving the book as divine, should deny that it contains a doctrine so plainly inconsistent with the character of its author. That moral evil, with its manifold calamities and woes, exists, cannot be denied; and so long as it is admitted that a benevolent God can, by the mere interpositions of his power, prevent the evil under the best system, the conclusion, to a greater or less extent, will be, either that there is no such being, or that if there is, he will sooner or later terminate the evil, in the universal holiness and happiness of his moral creation. The monstrous absurdity, that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good, will not be received by all as the only alternative except that of Atheism; or if received as such by

some, still the undeniable truth that a benevolent God will do all the good he can, will not be rejected by all for the sake of avoiding Infidelity and Universalism. The error obviously lies in the gratuitous and unauthorized assumption, that there can be no impossibility of God's preventing moral evil under a moral system, or at least under the best moral system, which impossibility shall be as truly consistent with his omnipotence, as is the impossibility of making two and two to be five, or a part equal to the whole. When this truth, that there may be such an impossibility, shall be seen and familiarized by the mind, as presented by just views of moral agency and of a moral system, then, and not till then, can the present system, notwithstanding the existence of moral evil, be seen to stand forth as all eternal monument of the wisdom, power and goodness of its Author; then, and not till then, will men learn to vindicate the ways of God to man, not by the far--fetched and unnatural principles of a vain philosophy, but by the natural, obvious, common-sense principle, by which they vindicate and applaud the wisest and best of earthly rulers, When his laws are transgressed--the principle, that notwithstanding the evil he has done, he has done the best thing which he can do.

LECTURE X: The present system not only may be, but is the best possible to the Creator.

Third leading proposition continued, viz.: God governs with rightful authority. -- God is benevolent -- 2. The present system not only may be, but is the best possible to the Creator. -- (a) It is better than none. -- Happiness greater than misery in this life. -- Results in a future world. -- (b) It is the best possible. -- No proof that a better could be adopted. -- The present, in its nature and tendencies, is the best conceivable, and therefore the best possible. -- This argued under two heads; 1. From its general form as a moral system, in respect to the kind of beings and the kind of influence used. -- 2. From its particular forms as a moral system, as involving influences from the nature and tendencies of moral action, from moral government, from an equitable moral government, and the same with a gracious economy. -- Remark.

IN the two preceding lectures, I have attempted to show that there is no proof against the benevolence of God, by showing that the present system, with its results, may be not only better than none, but may be the best possible to the Creator.

I now proceed,

To offer direct proofs of his benevolence.

Before I adduce the proposed proof, I will give an illustration of the argument on which I rely. A system under which evil exists, may be shown by decisive evidence to be the best possible system. It is obvious however, that this must be shown in a somewhat different manner from what it would be were there no evil connected with the system. To illustrate then by an example: a physician may perform the best possible operation of which the case admits, in amputating the limb of a patient, notwithstanding the pain which is inseparable from it. If all that can be shown in the case is, that the evils connected with the operation may be either inseparable parable from the necessary means of the greatest good, or may be themselves the necessary means of the greatest good, then, although the operation would not prove the physician to be benevolent, it would oblige us to admit that he may be benevolent, notwithstanding these evils. The question, when judged of merely by the facts now supposed, ought to remain undecided; or rather, cannot be decided in the negative. To this point, our preceding discussion respecting the question of the divine benevolence, so far as it depends on the existence of evil, has conducted us.

Let it now be supposed, that to amputate the diseased limb is better than to do nothing, and that there is no evidence that the physician has not done the best thing in his power, and there is good reason to believe the benevolence of the physician in the act. This may be said to be the lowest ground on which we are authorized to believe that he is benevolent. It is however, sufficient for this belief.

We will now suppose a stronger case--that the amputation of the limb is known to be the necessary means of the greatest good, and that all the evils connected with it either may be inseparable from it, so far as the power of the physician to prevent them is concerned, or may be themselves the necessary means of the greatest good. In such a case we have better grounds for awarding to the physician a benevolent design in the operation.

We will now suppose a case still stronger. Suppose not only that the amputation of the limb is known to be the necessary means of the greatest good, and that all the evils connected with it, except those which are the necessary means of the greatest good, are inseparable from the operation beyond the power of the physician to prevent them; that they result solely from the voluntary intemperance of the patient himself, and this when the physician does every thing in his power to prevent them, and the only legitimate conclusion is, that he is as benevolent as had this class of evils not existed. If we still further suppose, in respect to the other class of evils, viz., those which are the necessary means of the greatest good, that they become thus necessary only by the perverseness of the patient himself in his intemperance, then the conclusion is, that the physician is as benevolent as had these evils not existed, while these evils become themselves proof of his benevolence.

On these suppositions, it is obvious that the benevolence of the physician is as fully proved by the supposed operation, as the using of the best means of the best end can prove him to be, or as had results in good, without the slightest degree of evil, followed in the case. If now we suppose once more, that he combines with this operation every other expression of real kindness, then more indisputable and decisive proofs of benevolence could not be furnished. By all these forms of proof, it is now claimed that the benevolence of God is evinced to the human mind by that system of things, with its results, which he has adopted.

The argument as a whole, may be thus stated in a hypothetical form, with

the conclusion:

If there is no proof, so far as results are concerned, that God could have adopted a better system than he has adopted--if this system, in view of its results, is better than none--if this system be the best possible to God, and so the necessary means of the greatest good possible to him to secure--if all the evil connected with the system is either inseparable from the best system, in respect to divine prevention, or is the necessary means of the greatest good possible to God; and if God, in addition to all this, actually shows kindness to his creatures, in every other conceivable form which is consistent with the greatest good possible to him--then it will follow, that God is benevolent--even as benevolent as had the best possible, or best conceivable results, been actually secured.

Having attempted to show that the present system may be not only better than none, but the best possible, I now proceed to show as I proposed:

2. That it is not only better than none, but is the best possible to the Creator.

(1.) The present system is better than none. This I propose to show:

First. From the comparative amount of happiness and misery in the present world.

Secondly. From the results of the present system in a future world.

I appeal --

First; to the comparative amount of happiness and misery in the present world.

We claim then, that the amount of happiness so far transcends the amount of misery, as to put an end to all doubt on the question, whether the present system with its results is not far better than none. To contemplate the actual experience of men, and to institute such inquiries as the following, must decide this question. Where is the individual to be found who does not at every moment of life enjoy so much in present possession, or in hope of future good, as to render his existence desirable? How few--how very few are the instances of calamity and suffering with which manifold and rich blessing are not combined--how few individuals within our own knowledge, who are not enjoying every useful and necessary gift of divine bounty, and prepared and qualified to enjoy any additional happiness that might be furnished! Who is not ready to welcome the knowledge or information that gratifies curiosity to be entertained with the humor of the wit, or the ingenuity of the artist? What an amount of all that can be called human misery, is chiefly imaginary; and how may that which is real be diminished by contentment, by submission, or by resorting to available sources of happiness. Even when war, famine and pestilence pour in their floods of suffering and distress, how large a portion of the wide earth, untouched by their desolations, exhibits scenes of joy and gladness, while the sufferers themselves cling to life through the remembrance of joys that are past, or the hope of those that may come! In short, when we look over the world and see all its millions with exceptions which scarcely are to be thought of, retiring to rest every night, with the quiet and assured anticipation of the supply of the essential wants of tomorrow, and reflect that this is founded only on the uniform experience of the past, how can we fail to pronounce this a happy world--one at least in which existence is far better than non-existence? If we turn our thoughts to the innumerable sources of enjoyment in the animal, rational and moral departments of creation--if we contemplate the invisible existence that peoples every leaf, the sportive mazes of the insect tribes that abound in the atmosphere and the waters the notes of joy which are heard from every grove, the delighted activity of the larger animals, the wonderful provision made for their supply of food, the obvious and nice adaptations in their nature and condition for their comfortable or joyous existence; if we consider man's capacity for enjoyment from the wide creation around him, through the organs of sense, and the amount of good which would in this way be

furnished, were the means of it never perverted; if we think of the numerous channels of higher pleasures which are opened to man in his intellectual and social nature, and reflect how these are supplied by the everflowing streams of divine bounty in all the tender relations of life; and then reflect on the annihilation of all these earthly joys in the utter darkness and desolation of non-existence, how can we either wish not to have been or to cease to be?

If we contemplate men as moral beings, how are the vicious and guilty even exempted by divine compassion from the overwhelming agonies of remorse!--how are the virtuous solaced and gladdened as with the peace of heaven! Nor ought we to overlook the capacity of happiness involved in the very nature of moral beings; what a condition of perfection and of bliss it places within their power, and one not to be despaired of, but rather to be hoped for and expected by the well-founded belief of the enrapturing truth, that God is, and is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

If now we take the most gloomy view of human existence, so far as it can bear on the present inquiry, we can at most find but here and there an individual bosom so desolate of all good, so oppressed with present griefs and gloomy forebodings, as to consent to plunge into the dark gulf of non-existence, while myriads are exulting in life and its joys. How would these myriads, instead of counting their existence undesirable, prefer its endless duration as it is, rather than hazard a diminution of their happiness by any essential and yet uncertain change in their condition? Supposing the prospect of improvement to be fair and promising, very few with the uncertainty remaining whether the change would not be for the worse instead of for the better, would rationally in their own view incur its risk. This shows how we value life, being so well satisfied with its blessings, that to hazard the uncertainties of a change in our condition of existence, would be deemed the height of folly. It shows how readily, were the alternative a great diminution of happiness or non-existence, we should prefer the former, and how appalling would be the prospect of ceasing to be, compared with our present existence and the abundance of its joys. Everything in human society, in the devices of man, the laws

made to protect human life, the remedies used to heal diseases, the safeguards from accident and danger, the provision of food and raiment, in short, every preservative of life, shows that its loss is esteemed the greatest to which man in this world is liable. To preserve life is the great end to which human solicitude has ever been directed, and for which human ingenuity and skill have been exhausted. Nor can there be a doubt that it would still be so, were death known to be an eternal sleep--at least to such an extent, as to show how highly man values the existence which his Creator gives him in the present world.

Should it here be said, that I have now taken but a partial view of the results of the present system--that, although it be true that our earthly existence merely, is greatly to be preferred to non-existence, yet there is a future state, and a majority of men actually leave this world with that character, which insures their future unmingled and endless misery--I answer as before, that if we suppose a majority of men to die in sin, the light of nature does not decide that the present life is the whole of man's probation; and that therefore it may be true, that the design of God to recover men to virtue and to happiness, so conspicuously manifested here, will secure the perfect happiness of far the greater part of mankind hereafter. Indeed, this cannot, from the light of nature, be shown to be in the lowest degree improbable. Here then I might form a conclusive argument for the divine benevolence, thus: as there is no evidence that God is not doing all the good in his power, or that he could adopt a better system than the present; and as the present system, in view of its results in the present world, is better than none, it follows that God is benevolent.

But not to rest the argument on this ground merely, I remark secondly, that the present system, in view of its results in a future world, is better than none. Here it may be asked, with some degree of incredulity, what can we know, or rationally believe, under the mere light of nature, respecting the allotments of men in a future state? I answer, we can know all that which legitimate evidence warrants us to believe; and the declarations of God on this subject are not the only kind of evidence of which the case admits. His doings may as truly indicate his designs, and tell us what will be their results, as his declarations.

Here then I appeal to what has already been shown respecting the present system. I shall however but briefly appeal to these facts, intending more particularly to consider them in a subsequent argument, to show that the present system is the best possible to the Creator. The same facts show that the present system is better than none, as they evince the designs of God toward men in a future state.

The facts to which I refer are briefly these: the creation of the most perfect beings in kind; the end of their creation, as indicated by their nature, which is the best conceivable; the actual giving of the best law, or rule of action; the administration of a moral government involving this perfect law, and a strict adherence to the principles of perfect equity, and not only this, but connected with it, an economy of grace; every thing in the condition and circumstances of man fitted to restore him to virtue and happiness, and to secure him in this state of perfection; while no change is conceivable, which would add perfection to the system as the means of this high end. What then can we--ought we to believe, will be the results of such a system in a future world? Will this high design of a Being of infinite wisdom and power be wholly defeated? Will our present state, so bright with the smiles of his mercy, be followed by one only dark and dreadful, under the frowns of his anger? When God is so clearly aiming to restore man to holiness and happiness, is there nothing to hope for but universal sin and exact retribution? True it is, that from the light of nature alone, we cannot in all respects give a definite answer to the present inquiry. But we are constrained to give one that is general, and altogether decisive on the point before us. The nature of the present system, so clearly and extensively benignant in its design, proves that this design will not be wholly abortive, but in some good degree accomplished. This system, begun by infinite wisdom and power, and carried onward through all the generations of men, clearly indicates results in a future state corresponding with its own benignity and grace. To hesitate or doubt on this point, especially in view of the infinite natural perfection of the Being whose design it is, is to do violence to the laws of belief, as well as to disregard and distrust the only possible proofs of the divine placability.

In view then of what we must suppose will be the actual results of the present system in a future world, we must also believe that the present system, viewed in relation to these results, is better--far better than none, and the best possible to the Creator.

The way is now prepared to offer direct proofs of the benevolence of God from his works.

Argument I. The first argument is, that there is no proof, so far as results are concerned, that God could have adopted a better system than the present, and there is proof that the present system is better than none. That there is no proof so far as results are concerned, that God could have adopted a better system than the present, I have already attempted to prove, by showing that it may be such a system notwithstanding the existence of natural and moral evil. If what has been said on this subject be true, then their existence is to be wholly laid aside as entitled to no consideration in the argument. We have shown that all existing evils may be either the necessary means of the greatest good possible to the Creator, or in respect to divine prevention may be incidental to the best system possible to the Creator. Of course if there be other facts, which, were there no existing evil, would be sufficient to prove his benevolence, then as the existing evil furnishes no proof that he is not benevolent, or that the present system is not the best possible to the Creator, this evil must, in a fair argument, be laid out of consideration. The present system may be, notwithstanding the existence of the evil, the best possible to the Creator.

Again; it has been shown that the present system is better than none. And if this is true, and there is no evidence that God could have adopted a better system than the present, then it follows that the present system is the best possible to the Creator, and that he is therefore benevolent.

It may be well to remark here, that the argument, according to the illustration of it before given, is cumulative. When we have established

the two premises of the foregoing argument, we have furnished a valid proof of the divine benevolence, and therefore in each of our remaining positions we shall increase the proof.

I now offer a second general argument:

Argument II. The present system in its nature and tendencies is the best conceivable, and therefore the best possible to the Creator.

I have said that the proof of the divine benevolence is cumulative. What I claim for it in this respect is, that when as in our first argument, it is shown that in view of the results of the present system, it is the best possible to the Creator, then if in view of the nature and tendencies of the system, it be shown that it is the best conceivable, we have still further proof that it is the best possible to the Creator, and so much additional proof of his benevolence. The nature and tendencies of the system, if they can be shown to be the best conceivable, now become in view of the perfection of the system as judged by its results, so much uncounteracted and independent proof of the highest possible perfection of the system; proof as decisive and complete as were the system actually followed by the highest conceivable good which it is fitted to produce. Nor is this all. But when, as we have shown, not only there is not the least counteracting evidence from any other source, but the present system, judged of by its results, is the best possible to the Creator; then each and every adaptation, fitness, tendency of the system to the production of the highest conceivable good, is so much additional proof that the Author of the system designed the highest conceivable good: and is therefore so much additional proof of his benevolence in adopting the system. In this mode of reasoning then I now proceed to show that the present system is the best possible to the Creator, by proving that in its nature and tendencies it is the best conceivable system.

This I shall attempt to show:

1. From its general form as a moral system; and
2. From its more particular forms as such a system.

That the present system then is the best conceivable, and therefore the best possible to the Creator, I argue --

1. From its general form as a moral system. As a moral system in distinction from any system not moral, it is in kind the best conceivable. It is so, if we consider the kind of beings and the kind of influence which it involves.

And first in respect to the kind of beings. These are of course moral beings; and as such are formed in the image of God himself. No other work of the Creator could so employ his wisdom and his power--no other creatures could be so exalted in the scale of existence--no other product could so manifest the infinitude of his natural attributes. On no other could he look with so much self-complacency. "There is," said Augustine, "but one object greater than the soul, and that object is its Creator." Had God then not adopted a system of creation including moral beings, the highest place in the scale of created being had been vacant, and without them the interval between mere animal existence and God himself, had been unoccupied.

What then had been a system of creatures, endowed only with animal sensation, compared with a system of beings capable of holy affections and holy activity, and each and all capable of possessing perfect, even the highest degree of happiness conceivable? If God were good, what else could he do but create mind-beings in his own image, with intelligence to know himself, his character, his will, his designs, his works; with hearts to burn with love, with wills to obey his perfect will with conscience to feel the high deservings of right and wrong moral action, and to sway all the powers of the soul in the harmony of perfect virtue; beings with sympathies and social tendencies, capable of living in the

past, the present, and the future--capable of entering into fellowship with God, and of awakening his confidence and his complacency as the executors of his high counsels; beings so powerful in intellect, as to be able to look with open face on the full effulgence of his Godhead, so capacious of heart as to receive the fullness of joy at his right hand, and who thus filled with all the fullness of God, might stand around his throne as mirrors of his own creation, to reflect the light of his glory forever? For such a creation what shall be substituted? The present system then, in respect to the kind of beings which it includes, is the best conceivable, and in this respect, there being no counteracting evidence, furnishes another independent and decisive proof of the Creator's goodness.

The same thing is true of the present system, as it employs a moral influence. After what has been already said, I may assume the position as incontrovertible, that the universal and perfect holiness of a moral creation is necessary to the highest conceivable happiness of such a creation. It is equally undeniable, that the kind of influence which is peculiar to a moral system, is indispensable to the production of holiness in the least degree in moral beings. It is of course necessary to the highest degree of holiness, and therefore to the highest degree of happiness.

In this view of this kind of influence, and of the system which includes it, the system has all the value which would pertain to a moral creation made perfectly blessed by perfect moral excellence. And who can estimate the worth of an influence which is indispensable to such a result? Who will attempt to conceive of any other as its substitute? Nor is this its only feature. There is a high and ennobling pleasure in using this influence, nor scarcely less in feeling it. To uphold and move the material universe in all its regularity and beauty, to give form, and life, and activity to the whole intelligent creation--to pervade, sustain, and animate all as the handiwork of Omnipotence, is a source of high delight to the infinite Author of all. But to influence mind--to be the author of that system of truth, of evidence, of motive, which is adapted to control and direct intelligent, free, moral beings, and to secure the high end of their existence--fitted to accomplish such a result in beings with powers

adequate to defeat it--to bring forth an influence which shall give absolute perfection to a moral universe for eternity, without in the least infringing on the noble prerogative of their freedom, imposes a new demand on omnipotence, and imparts a grandeur and glory to God's dominion, which excludes from thought every other.

At the same time, to be the subject of such influence--to live under that system, and those manifestations of truth, which are thus adapted to move moral beings, and to secure such results--a system which has tasked the wisdom and the power of the infinite Being, and whose results can fail only through the perverseness of creatures, when in respect to the kind of influence God could do no more; to have such interests placed within one's own power--committed to choice, enlightened and guided by intelligence to comprehend them--to be able to secure the result designed by an act of will, and if secured, to say, "I have done it, when I could have done the opposite"--to live under a system, where the alternative is the self-perfection or self-destruction of an immortal being--this is to occupy a place of exaltation and dignity, which none can transcend or equal. If such a being rises, what a height of glory! If he falls, what ruin! The alternative is indeed tremendous, but is demanded by the essential perfection of the system, and its foreseen and glorious results. Every tendency justly estimated is adapted to a successful and triumphant issue. The influence from the doom foreseen is only salutary. It can be incurred only by voluntary perversion and fault; it can come only by the great law of choice between life and death, without which a more dreadful ruin must come to all--without which the infinite Being himself must sacrifice his perfect character, and with this his perfect blessedness.

Such then is the influence which is involved in the present, as a moral system. How degrading to creatures, how unworthy of a perfect God, were any other in its stead! How repulsive, how revolting a system of coercion--or rather, what degrading absurdity in the thought of controlling moral beings by physical agency, or by the mechanism of cause and effect! The mind, created in God's image, must be governed, if at all, by the influence which moves him in all his doings--even by that truth which fixes and reveals the eternal relations of things, and gives the soul its life

in perfect holiness and perfect bliss. Without this influence of the system, what will become of its issues, in all the self-complacency, free, voluntary, joyous activity, and eternal triumphs, of which perfected moral beings are capable? On this influence in distinction from every other, these results all depend. Its tendency is to produce such, and only such--even the highest conceivable good of the best conceivable system of creatures. This tendency of this influence in a system which is better than none, and which, for aught that can be shown to the contrary, is the best possible to the Creator, is as conspicuous, and as obviously designed by its Author to secure its benign and blessed results, as were they actually secured. The present system then, as it involves a moral influence in distinction from any other, is the best conceivable, and in this respect furnishes another independent and decisive proof of God's benevolence.

That the present system is the best conceivable, and therefore the best possible to the Creator, I argue-

2. From its more particular forms as a moral system. Here I appeal to it as comprising four particular forms of a moral system: that influence to secure perfection in character and in happiness, which results from the perceived nature and tendencies of moral action; the influence of a moral government; that of an equitable moral government; and that of an equitable moral government under a gracious economy.

In the first place, the present system comprises that influence to secure perfection in character and in happiness, which results from the perceived nature and tendencies of moral action. These are plainly and impressively manifested in the constitution and condition of the human mind. I need not here repeat the facts on this part of the subject, which have been so recently presented. In view of them, I may ask, what more in this respect could God have done? The answer is, nothing--which for aught that appears to the contrary, would not have been for the worse. If we contemplate the knowledge of truth which is thus given to every mind, in its source, its nature, its power, can any thing, be conceived in this respect to heighten the excellence of the system? It is knowledge of the

fixed and immutable relations of right and wrong, given in the very nature and elements of our being; knowledge of good and evil in their highest conceivable degrees, and of the only means of obtaining the one and avoiding the other; knowledge of all that man need to know as a being made for immortality, that he may secure his perfection in character and in happiness; knowledge, which is pressed upon thought and susceptibility in experience, and as it were every moment; knowledge, which can be practically resisted and counteracted only by the most desperate violence and infatuation of which moral beings are capable; knowledge which even when thus resisted puts its firm grasp on the conscience and holds it there: still opens the bright visions of hope in the self-complacency of virtue, and reveals the terrors of self-condemnation in the remorse of guilt, and thus distinctly and at every step of life is telling man of a retribution in that heaven or hell which he carries in his own bosom; knowledge therefore which is fitted so far as knowledge, from these sources can be, to secure in the best manner and in the highest degree, man's perfection in character and in happiness.

This tendency of this knowledge is as manifest as were the result actually secured. It is furnished in a system which is not only better than none, but which for aught that can be shown to the contrary, is the best possible to the Creator. It is therefore as obviously designed by the author of the system to secure the result which it is fitted to produce, as were that result actually secured. The present system then, as it comprises that influence from the perceived nature and tendencies of moral action, which is fitted to promote the highest blessedness of God's moral creation, furnishes another proof of the highest conceivable perfection of the system and of the benevolence of its author.

In the second place, the present system comprises a moral government. Moral government in the lowest import of the terms, includes a moral governor, a rule of action as the expression of his will--good promised to obedience and evil threatened to disobedience. These things, though they do not necessarily include the equitable administration of a moral government, are essential to what can be properly called a moral government. Without now insisting on the equity of God's moral

administration over men, still he is administering a moral government over them, and such a moral government as is consistent with the system's being the best possible, and also better than none. In this view of a moral government, I claim that it is an excellence which is essential to the perfection of the system. Let then the present system without, be compared with one which includes a moral government, and be contemplated in relation to the great end of a moral system. What would it be, when compared with one which exhibits the infinite Creator of men, as also their sovereign Lawgiver and Judge? In this relation that great Being is presented to the mind as taking a deeper, stronger interest in the moral conduct of his moral creatures as the means of their perfection and happiness, than in any and every thing besides. In this relation he makes a clear expression of his preference of right to wrong moral action on the part of every subject, and shows them that their highest interests can be secured only by obedience to his will. With their happiness and misery at his disposal, he authorizes only the expectation on their part that all depends on their conduct. Whatever conviction of duty then we may suppose men to derive from any other source--what additional strength and power must be given to that conviction by the clear and decisive promulgation of the will of God in exact accordance with it! How feeble and fluctuating--how evanescent, easily forgotten and disregarded the conviction derived from one source only, compared with the same derived from both; how must the conviction of duty first obtained from our nature and condition and the tendencies of moral action, be impressed by its known coincidence with the will, the law of Him who holds all destiny in his hands! While our very being reveals the absolute and unalterable law, that if we would be happy and not miserable we must be good, the execution of this law is made known in the immutable will and resistless power of an infinite being. But if we suppose no moral government over this world, then no evidence can be found of a retribution for the right and wrong doing of men. The distribution of good and evil in this world is not in the lowest sense retributive. Aside from God's relation as, a moral governor of men, legal sanctions--good and evil awarded to sustain authority--a Judge to approve and condemn, to reward and to punish are not to be thought of. But with a moral governor in view, and he no other than the infinite Creator of all, holding the allotment in the happiness and misery of every creature in his power, and giving a full indication of his purpose to make them in a high degree happy or miserable as they obey or disobey his will, what other influence can be substituted for this, in a

system which is better than none, and which for aught that can be shown to the contrary, is the best possible? It is an influence which can be viewed in such a case as tending only to good, and to good in the highest conceivable degree. The present system therefore, as it comprises a moral government on the part of God, has another excellence which is essential to its highest conceivable perfection, and in this respect furnishes another independent and decisive proof of the benevolence of its author.

In the third place, the present system includes an equitable moral government. There is a sense in which the equity of a moral administration or of a moral government may imply the benevolence of the moral governor. I use this language however as I have before said, merely to characterize what may be called his providential dispensations as being in accordance with the principles of equity, whether we suppose him to be a benevolent or a selfish being. In other words, by the equity of God's moral administration over this world--I mean that his providential dispensations are what they would be on the supposition of his perfect benevolence, without assuming that such is his character. In this sense the equity of his administration whether he be a benevolent or a selfish being, consists in his giving the best law or rule of action, and in annexing to this law those sanctions in good and evil which express his highest approbation of right and highest disapprobation of wrong moral action, and which are requisite as such expressions to sustain his authority.

I claim to have shown already, that God is administering in the sense now stated, an equitable moral government over men, and that without so doing it would be impossible that he should show himself to be entitled to the least respect as a moral governor. The impossibility of this on the supposition of his not giving the best law, will not be denied. So if we suppose him to annex to the best law, less degrees of natural good and evil than the highest as the sanctions of his law, it would show that he approves of right moral action less than supremely, and disapproves of wrong moral action less than supremely. Such a manifestation of feeling toward these objects would be decisive; that he does not regard things as they are; that he does not act on the principle of eternal rectitude that of

regarding the best kind of action as the best, and the worst kind of action as the worst; that instead of showing himself disposed to sustain his authority, and to employ this influence for the welfare of his kingdom, he acts on principles of partiality, favoritism, injustice, tyranny; that he is therefore a selfish and malignant being, and in no respect entitled to the homage of his subjects, or to the throne he occupies.

But in the present system, instead of thus subverting his authority as a moral governor by disproving his benevolence, God, as we have seen, adheres to strict equity in his moral administration. He gives the best law or rule of action, and by the requisite legal sanctions, expresses the highest approbation of right, and the highest disapprobation of wrong moral action. He does the very things in these essential respects which he would do were he a being of perfect benevolence; the very things, without which he cannot prove his benevolence and sustain his authority as a moral governor. For what other higher or better influence can be substituted for this, for the purpose of securing the greatest amount of right moral action, and thus the greatest amount of happiness, in a moral creation? Could any higher or better influence for the purpose be derived from natural good and evil, considered as merely so much motive employed to secure right and prevent wrong moral action? Could it result from giving any other law than the best--from expressing in the form of law any other preference than of the best kind of action? Could any higher or better influence for the same purpose result from legal sanctions, considered as the expressions of any other particular feelings or emotions toward right and wrong moral action, than those of the highest approbation of the one and the highest disapprobation of the other? In these respects plainly, no other influence conceivable can possess the same salutary tendency. In this way only can he manifest those attributes of a perfect moral governor, which we call his holiness, justice;--holiness in all its love and complacency toward moral excellence, and in that inaccessible purity which recoils from, and in that withering abhorrence which forbids the approach of the least moral defilement; justice in that serene and awful majesty of its inflexible purpose to sweep a rebellious world into the abyss of ruin, rather than suffer the least obscurity or infringement of his right to reign. Under no other manifestation of God, could obedience to his will be rendered as

the will of a perfect being. There might indeed, be a moral system, and moral influences, and if you please, a moral government; but there could be no moral government in the hands of a perfect being; none in that distinctive character which results from the absolute prerogative of rightful dominion. Unless we see God through the medium of an equitable administration, we cannot see him as immutably holy and just, and can therefore never confide, love, and obey. In a word, it is only through an equitable moral administration, that God as a moral governor, can manifest his perfect character.

Now I do not say, that such an administration necessarily excludes all opposing evidence on the question of his moral character; but that when it exists, as it does in the present case without the least opposing evidence--when it exists as an element of a system, which, in view of its results, is, so far as we have seen, the best possible to the Creator, it can be viewed only as an essential element of the perfection of the system, and as such, another and decisive proof of its perfection and of the benevolence of its Author. In such a case, what other view can be taken of his giving his perfect law--perfect in its precept, and perfect in its sanctions--except that of the most unequivocal and decisive expression of his supreme and benevolent preference of right moral action, and as its consequence, the highest possible happiness of his moral creation? What can be the design of making such an expression of these feelings, in this most impressive form conceivable, except that by so doing he may secure this result? Were this actually accomplished by this means, who then could doubt its adaptation to the end, and the benevolent design of its Author? But its tendency to this result is a matter of absolute knowledge, and would be no more obvious than it now is were the result actually produced. And now, when the design of its Author to secure this result, instead of being obscured by the slightest shade of evidence to the contrary, is confirmed by the manifestation of his benevolence in every other form, this design is as conspicuous and undeniable as is the tendency to this result of the same element of the system. Neither can be denied or doubted. The design of God in administering an equitable moral government over men, in order that the end should be produced, for which it is perfectly adapted, stands forth as conspicuous as were that end actually accomplished in the highest conceivable happiness of his

moral creation. In view then of the equity of God's moral administration, we say that it is one element of the best possible system, which is not only an indispensable, but an independent and decisive proof of equity in principle; thus revealing on the throne of moral dominion, a God (if perfect holiness and perfect justice, and of course, a God of perfect benevolence.

In the fourth place, the present system is the best conceivable, as it includes an equitable moral government under an economy of grace. That God is administering such a government over men, I persuade myself has been shown in former lectures. We have seen that the manner in which he distributes good and evil in this world entirely harmonizes with an economy of grace; that while there is nothing in the whole history of his providence inconsistent with the strict principles of equity in his administration, there are still decisive intimations that he has not abandoned these principles--that every thing in the manner in which he treats this world of transgressors, clearly and impressively bespeaks his will that they should return to duty and to happiness, rather than continue in sin, and die forever. We see him furnishing to all the most decisive proofs that their highest happiness can be found only in obedience to his will--drawing them to repentance by the most powerful influence, that of manifested kindness; by those "cords of love and hands of a man," which, it would seem no perversity of heart could resist; dispensing natural evil, under the kindest forms of necessary moral discipline or paternal chastisement, with the obvious design to reclaim and bless his disobedient children--making the present state of man most obviously one of trial and of discipline, and as such, designed and fitted to form his character to permanent virtue and happiness--placing man's present enjoyment so far and so clearly in his own power, as to show beyond the possibility of doubt, that a universal and perfect moral reformation would transform the world, darkened and afflicted as it is by sin and its woes, into a primeval paradise; thus in every conceivable form and mode of dispensation, clearly evincing his power to sustain such a system of justice and of grace--forbidding a surmise either of malignant intention, or of weak and indulgent connivance at iniquity, and so rendering every other supposition inadmissible, except, that while he sustains the principles of eternal righteousness inviolate, he is, in the

fullness of love and mercy, aiming to restore a lost world to duty, to favor, and to happiness. Thus does the great Creator present himself to his guilty moral creation, A JUST GOD, AND YET A SAVIOUR.

Here then we see the crowning excellence of the present system. I shall not attempt to specify in detail those parts of God's providence which are eminently fitted to extend and heighten our admiration of this system of justice and of grace. To sustain the principles of eternal righteousness unsullied and unobscured, and show himself placable to the guilty, and even solicitous to reclaim and bless--to uphold in all their stability the pillars of his throne, and yet give it the attractions of a throne of grace--this is a system which combines with every other conceivable excellence, the highest, brightest of them all, that of an economy of grace. The present system then, in another respect, i.e., as including an economy of grace, is the best conceivable.

The argument for God's benevolence, as thus furnished by the light of nature, may be thus presented. The present system with its results, is better than none; notwithstanding the evil which exists, the system may be the best possible to the Creator; while in its adaptations and tendencies to good, it is in every respect the best conceivable. God therefore is benevolent. Were a physician to perform an operation on a patient, which were better than to do nothing, and though connected with some pain, might still be the best possible, and in respect to all its tendencies, were it ascertained to be the best conceivable operation, who would doubt his benevolence.

Were it however my principal object here to prove the benevolence of God, I might proceed greatly to increase the force of the present argument. For having once shown, on the premises now presented, that God is benevolent, it were perfectly legitimate to infer not merely that all existent evil may be consistent, but that it is consistent with his benevolence, either as the necessary means of the greatest good, or as incidental in respect to his prevention, to that system which is the necessary means of the greatest good.

In respect to natural evil, viewed as it must be, as the necessary means of the greatest good, instead of furnishing an objection to his benevolence, it becomes an additional proof of it. As to moral evil, viewed as it must now be: viz., as incidental in respect to divine prevention to a system in which God has done all that was possible to prevent it, and to secure universal holiness in its stead, it leaves the benignity of his design unobscured; and we are obliged to say, there is all the proof of God's benevolence, which there would have been, had the universal and perfect holiness and happiness of his moral creation been the actual result.

Having arrived at this point, I might bring forward, as still further proofs, furnished in the fact that he shows kindness to his creatures in every conceivable form which is consistent with their greatest good; and this, not in respect to its salutary tendencies and relations, in view of which it has given so much force to our preceding arguments, but under two very different relations: viz., as so much good or enjoyment merely, and as such, all that in degree, which is consistent with the highest good of the recipients; and also, as so much good conferred on sinful, ill-deserving creatures, whom, as a benevolent and just God, he might have utterly destroyed. To all this good, we must add the grand and glorious results of that system of grace and mercy in future and eternal happiness, as conferred on guilty beings whose endless destruction had been alike consistent with justice and benevolence.

Here let us then advert, first, to what had been the proofs of God's benevolence, had perfect holiness and happiness actually resulted to his moral creation. We have this proof at hand, for we have proved that he most truly and sincerely designed this result. Let us now advert again to what would have been the condition of this world of transgressors, had God, as he might, displayed his benevolence and been just, instead of displaying his benevolence in pardoning grace. Let the fearful results of exact retribution in the woes of the second death, be compared with the riches of his long-suffering, and the everflowing streams of his providential bounty in this world, and with (as our previous argument

authorizes us to expect in the world to come) the eternal blessedness of a multitude which no man can number, of pure, holy, and happy spirits, so vast, so glorious, that the few incorrigibly wicked whom necessity confines in the prison of state, shall be only as an unnoticed speck amid the overwhelming glory of the whole.

I have thus attempted to exhibit the proofs of God's benevolence, as shown by the light of nature. And what other or higher proofs could be furnished by his works or his doings, I am compelled to say, is beyond my power to conceive. Contemplated as a state of trial and preparation for results in eternity, the nature, the condition, and the prospects of man, manifest infinite wisdom and power, directed by infinite goodness, aiming at results which shall forever tell the Creator's capacity to bless. To specify an imperfection, or suggest an improvement, defies the power of the human intellect. This world then, must be esteemed not as furnishing merely some faint intimations, some slight grounds of conjecture that God is good, but as presenting to every eye that witnesses the operations of his hands, one of the brightest theaters of his infinite benevolence--a scene in God's creation, in which, counteracted indeed in its fullest results by human wickedness, it only awakes to new and unheard of desires and efforts to bless: benevolence which shines forth like a sun, when all that might seem to obscure its light, only serves to give new warmth and splendor to its beams. For in what brighter forms of love and goodness could God appear, than as the God of redemption to this guilty, lost world?

If now I have proved that God is a being of perfect benevolence, it follows that he administers his moral government over this world in the exercise of rightful authority. Having before proved that God administers a moral government over men in some proper import of the phrase; having shown that he administers his moral government in equity and in the exercise of rightful authority; I have established my leading proposition, that

GOD ADMINISTERS A PERFECT MORAL GOVERNMENT OVER MEN.

I conclude with one reflection on the views which have been given of the

moral government of God over this world, viz.:

How undesirable that Christianity were not a revelation from God. If Christianity is not a revelation from God, still every thing of vital importance to man which Christianity says, IS TRUE, except its grand peculiarity, the manner in which this world's redemption from sin is achieved--every thing is true, except its discovery of a triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in their respective relations to the work of man's redemption from sin. If Christianity is not a revelation, still there is an infinite being who has given existence to creatures, formed in his own image, and destined to live and to act, for weal or for woe, through a coming eternity. For the accomplishment of his eternal counsels, God has assumed the high relation of a perfect moral governor of these creatures of his power. Perfectly benevolent, he is also inflexibly just. He will never sacrifice the majesty of law, the glory of his moral dominion, and the happiness of his moral creation, in tenderness to rebels. His throne stands in all its grandeur on the pillars of eternal justice, and, though changed into a throne of grace, still in all its darkness and tempest, it speaks undiminished terror to the determined transgressor. It is changed into a throne of grace, but only to the rebel who is penitent and contrite in heart. It is a throne of grace, that, with its attractions and its charms, it may win rebellion to loyalty.

If then, Christianity is not a divine revelation, every thing (I mean every thing substantial, for I certainly admit that Christianity sheds a new and brighter light on all moral truths), with the exceptions made, which Christianity teaches, IS TRUE. Every thing respecting God, man, time, and eternity--every relation of God to man, and of man to God--every relation, tendency, and consequence of right and wrong moral action every foundation of hope, ground of fear, retrospect of the past, reality of the present, prospect of the future--the same probation, the same law, the same economy of mercy, the same judgment and retribution, the same heaven and hell--all, all in every great and substantial respect, is the same. Christianity, with the exception made, is only a republication in brighter characters, of the truths of God and of nature--of God and nature immutable as its author. If Christianity then is not a divine revelations

where are we? Just where we are if it is a revelation, with this difference, the light it sheds on the scheme of redemption is extinguished! How the perverseness of rebels is to be subdued to love, and if subdued, how can a just God receive them to favor; here all is mystery unsolvable--darkness impenetrable, even appalling! Man, a sinner, and guilty as he is, I admit might repent, and might hope for mercy from his Maker. But would he? Man, in the bondage of sin, what chains so strong?--man, dead in sin, what death so hopeless? who shall deliver? what power shall raise to life, give health, and strength, and beauty immortal to this victim of sin and death but the power of him who made him? Man, I said, might hope for mercy. But with a clear perception of his fearful guilt and God's fearful justice; when looking at a sin-avenging God as he must, and asking, how can such a God show the same abhorrence of sin and yet forgive, which he would show by the endless destruction of a rebellious world, then it is that the fears and dismay of guilt take hold on the spirit, and hope trembles, falters, expires. I say not that it must be so, but that it always has been, and always will be, at least with exceptions not to be named. For remember, it is not the hope of the infidel that--we need--the hope that God is unjust--the hope like his, that reposes in a selfish, malignant deity; it is not the hope which fancy and the love of sin beget, and which rushes fearless on the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler, without knowing who or what he is; it is the hope which looks upon a just God, and with a sense of his righteous indignation, reposes sweetly in his mercy. And yet there is so much terror here, there is so much midnight darkness and thunder, that the feeble rays of mercy do not suffice. Guilt will look up with confidence only when it sees the throne of God upheld by the man that is his fellow. Take away "the incarnate mystery," extinguish the light which reveals the great atonement of Christianity, (ignorance and presumption might indeed hope in a selfish deity, in an unjust God, find realize a just perdition), but extinguish this light, the light which reveals God's mercy through his Son, and let in the terrors of guilt and of God on this sinful world, and how would they weep and howl in the frenzies of despair! Thanks -- may I not say it--thanks to the impostor, if such he was, who devised the great atonement of the gospel. Falsehood--can we say less?--falsehood is better than truth! Imposture? Falsehood? No. Here is the seal of God. It is just the atonement which man needs, the atonement which he must have, to embolden conscious guilt to approach a spotless God; the only atonement which will in fact, give hope and peace and heaven to a guilty world. God devised it. God revealed it,

that all other manifestations of his mercy might not be in vain. With no known instance of actual forgiveness, with no formal declaration of God that he will forgive, with the burden of conscious guilt upon us, and with no possible conception of any expedient by which God could show mercy, we should in fact, be conducted to the most fearful forebodings of wrath. In this midnight of gloom and terror all our research and all our reasonings would actually terminate. And back again to this midnight, from the light which beams upon us from the gospel of God would the infidel conduct us. Let him go, if he will, into all this darkness and dwell amid its terrors. Let him go, if he will, to the bar of a just God on the footing of his own righteousness, and be tried by his innocence or his merit; let him trust an unjust, selfish, malignant deity, for he has no other God. But give me hope in a God of mercy. I speak what you feel, and what I feel, when I say, I am a sinner--a sinner against a holy, just, and perfect God. I need his mercy. I am a guilty, lost immortal. I need deliverance from deserved and endless misery. Oh! hide not from me the mercy, the abundant mercy of God in Christ Jesus.

LECTURE XI: Nature of Divine Revelation.

APPLICATION OF THE ARGUMENT FROM NATURE, TO PROVE THAT CHRISTIANITY IS FROM GOD.

Nature of Divine Revelation. -- Argument for its necessity. -- Different views of the grounds of this. -- 1. Not necessary, because man cannot discover moral and religious truth: but 11. Necessary, 1. To make known the truth In the most perfect method, especially by language. -- Absurdity of objecting to this medium -- 2. To receive the practical Influence of such truth. -- The experiment by the light of nature decisive, shown by the ancient philosophers. -- Their views Beauty, vacillating, erroneous. -- Practical influence feeble on themselves and others. -- Prevalence of Immorality. -- Their teachings and example limited.

By a divine revelation, we may understand some mode adopted by our Creator of imparting the knowledge of religious and moral truth to the human mind, more direct than any such knowledge obtained by the light of nature; or employing human reason on the character, the works and providence of God. On the question whether a divine revelation is necessary to man, the parties have, in my view, often adopted unqualified assertions, which are erroneous and even fatal to a satisfactory conclusion.

On the one hand, it has been affirmed that all the knowledge which is necessary or useful to man as a moral being may be obtained from the works of God, and that every other mode of discovering truth to the human mind on the part of God, is impossible, incredible, and useless. On the other, the utter insufficiency of human reason to make the least useful discovery of moral and religious truth from the mere light of nature, and the consequent absolute necessity of a direct revelation from God, have been strenuously maintained. It is true, that some of the advocates for the necessity of a revelation, concede that the light of nature furnishes the means of much important knowledge, and often seem to contend only

for the necessity of further discoveries by the light of revelation. And yet the same writers assert with frequency, "that human reason CANNOT attain any certain knowledge of the will or law of God, or of the true happiness of man." This incongruity, which appears to characterize the discussions on this subject by leaving the real question vague and indeterminate, has contributed in no small degree to unsettle opinions and to perpetuate discussion. To what extent the necessity of a divine revelation exists, and what are the precise grounds or reasons of it, are points of the first importance to all satisfactory views on the subject, as well as to the termination of the controversy with the opposers of revelation.

It may be admitted generally and indefinitely, that a revelation is necessary to man, and yet its ends or purposes, and the extent, grounds, or reasons of the necessity, may be left undecided. In a state of utter darkness, light is necessary as the only medium of vision. But we may suppose a degree of light adequate for a distinct sight of surrounding objects, and yet that a man should refuse to see them, and this in a case in which greater light would result in actual vision. In the one case, light is necessary, because man cannot see without it; in the other, to secure his actual vision, because he will not. Again, there may be a degree of light adequate to the distinct vision of some objects and not of others; and the consequence may be, either that neither class of objects will be seen, or that the former only will be. In these cases, the particular purposes or ends, on account of which greater light is necessary, are different, as are the objects to be seen. The grounds or reasons of the necessity differ--greater light in the one case, being necessary to actual vision of any of the objects; in the other, necessary to the actual vision of all the objects. Further; a greater degree of light may be necessary, not because man cannot, nor because he will not see every object, but to enable him to see every object with greater distinctness and effect than would otherwise be possible.

So in respect to a divine revelation. It may be necessary for a great variety of particular purposes or ends, and the grounds or reasons of the necessity in respect to these ends may be very different. To maintain the

general proposition that a divine revelation is necessary, is not fitted to convey precise and definite views on this important subject, nor to terminate this part of the controversy with the opposers of revelation.

While therefore, I maintain the general doctrine, that a divine revelation is necessary to man, to prevent misapprehension,

I remark --

I. That a divine revelation is not necessary to this world, because man cannot discover much moral and religious truth without it. The advocates of the utter incompetence of human reason to make any such discoveries, seem to have fallen into the error, by mistaking the lamentable ignorance of the world, for proof of an entire incapacity for knowledge, and from a misguided zeal to magnify the gift of a revelation, and the grace that conferred it. That this mode of reasoning is unauthorized, may be confidently decided, in view of its intrinsic deficiency, and on the authority of revelation itself. It is intrinsically deficient, since the mere fact of ignorance is no proof of incapacity for knowledge. In revelation itself the ignorance and crimes of the heathen world are never traced to incapacity for knowledge, but the clear manifestation of God, and the consequent inexcusableness of man both for his ignorance and his crimes, are constantly asserted, and these are traced to the humiliating fact "that men did not like to retain God in their knowledge."

The attempt to exalt the grace of God in the gift of a revelation by depreciating man's capacity for knowledge, is still more to be regretted. Admit, as the reasoning assumes, the entire incompetence of the human mind to obtain any knowledge of religious truth, and the grace of God in conferring a revelation on the world is wholly subverted. On the part of men there could be neither obligation nor crime. The necessity of a revelation is created by their Maker and not by themselves. Revelation could not be a gift to a sinful world, criminally resisting the light of truth

and perverting the means of knowledge, and thus deserving to be given up to a reprobate mind. But it is a provision absolutely necessary to constitute men moral and accountable beings, and therefore demanded, if they are held responsible for their conduct by every principle of equity. It is a matter of debt, of justice; and grace is no more grace. This attempt therefore, to magnify the grace of God in the gift of a revelation wholly defeats its object.

In proof of the position that the human mind is competent to discover much important truth without a revelation, I might appeal to what I have already shown to be true concerning God and concerning man, from the mere light of nature. I might appeal also to the actual discoveries of such truth, especially to the writings of many of the ancient philosophers.

The appeal to revelation itself on this point would be still more decisive. On this authority it might be shown that man cant know the very truths to a considerable extent, without a revelation, which the advocates for its necessity affirm that he cannot know without it. For example, the being and perfections of God, his moral government, his moral character; the law of his moral government, and of course the sum of human duty--to a great extent the specific duties toward God, toward man, and toward himself; the doctrines of human sinfulness, of the necessity of a change of moral character; the placability of God; the immortality of the soul, future rewards and punishments.

Here it would be a very useful inquiry, how far the Scriptures will bear us out in the assertion of this matter of fact not only by appealing to their explicit declarations, and their clear implications, but especially to the variety of forms, and to the great extent in which the sacred writers make the previous knowledge of mankind the basis of their reasonings, instead of resting on their authority as inspired teachers, although this is never abandoned.

But whatever ground the advocate of Christianity may take, the infidel will

admit that the human mind is competent to discover much religious and moral truth without a revelation.

I proceed to show --

II. That a divine revelation is necessary to the world --

(1.) To give the highest conceivable perfection to the mode of making known the truth to the human mind.

(2.) To any extensive and useful discovery of truth to the human mind.

(3.) To the discovery of some important truths, which man could not discover without it.

(1.) A divine revelation is necessary to the highest conceivable perfections of the mode of making known the truth to the human mind. There are only two conceivable modes of discovering truth to the human mind by our Creator: viz., through the medium of his works of creation and providence and by a revelation. My object is not to compare the excellence or desirableness of these two modes, but simply to show that the mode which combines both, is better than that which should include but one; or rather is the best conceivable. Nor does my object require me to examine the different specific modes of making a revelation which are possible, although it were easy to show the superiority of that mode to every other in which it is claimed that God has made a revelation. I speak only of some mode of revelation, as additional to the mere light of nature, and maintain that it is indispensable to the highest conceivable perfection in the mode of discovering religious and moral truth to the human mind. This position is, to my own mind, so palpably obvious, that had it not been denied, it could scarcely require or justify an attempt to prove its truth. Who does not know the power of speech and written language to convey truth with peculiar precision, clearness, and effect? Why is it that the very men who deny all revelation, and profess, while so doing, to impart to the world the light of truth, resort to oral and written language as

the medium of conveyance? Why not leave the world to spell out truth on this great question from the nature of things, as affording ample right without the addition of speech and writing to instruct them? Plainly because they believe that by this addition they adopt the most effective mode of imparting knowledge and of giving it permanence, impression, and prevalence in the minds of other men. And will they pronounce their own condemnation, by pronouncing that mode of conveying truth useless, on which themselves rely as the best? And if not useless on the part of men, why useless on the part of God? God has confessedly formed the human mind to be taught and instructed by himself, through the medium of his works. And is it not equally manifest that he has formed the human mind to be taught and instructed through the medium of language? Is not this mode of conveying knowledge one which involves every facility and every advantage? If God has qualified men to learn truth from what he does, has he not also qualified them to learn truth from what he says? Why then should it be thought a thing incredible, that God should adopt one method as well as the other, or rather, that he should adopt both? If his children are to read and learn his character, will, and designs, their duty and destiny from his teachings, why not avail himself of their capacity to be taught through the medium of language? Why may he not instruct them by his words as well as by his works; why not give them two books as well as one--the book of revelation as well as the book of nature? Would not the latter mode be as natural, as effectual as truly in accordance with their accustomed manner of learning truth as the former? Are not the advantages of the latter so great, so obvious, as to render it exceedingly desirable to all who would wish to learn? Why is it that we wish every thing in art, science, literature, history, morals, and religion, that is true and of importance to be known, reduced to writing? Why is it that laws must be written and published, that contracts, bonds, deeds, mortgages, every title to an estate, must be put upon record? Because this is confessedly the most perfect method of securing the knowledge of facts. No man is ignorant of the importance and necessity of written records and books on every subject of moment pertaining to this world. And yet if we speak of a book from God, teaching man how to secure the great end for which God made him, we talk of a useless book--aye, of one worse than useless. Books from men, even on religion, if it be of the right sort, are of inestimable value; but a book from God, teaching such a religion as God might be supposed to teach, would be a thing of naught. You cannot feel too much contempt for it! And this is

a consistency of which to boast!

But not to dwell on absurdity so glaring, let us for a moment reflect on the end to be secured and the mode of accomplishing it. The end is, so to instruct this sinful world in religious and moral truth, that it shall become effectual to its moral reformation. Now, without disparaging at all the light of nature, without supposing God to reveal one other truth to man than what may be learned from it, I ask what mode of bringing this very system of truth before the human mind would be best fitted to the end to be accomplished? Simply that which we call the light of nature, or that which should combine with it--the light of a revelation through the medium of human language. Such a revelation, such books from deists, from infidels, are at least regarded by themselves as an improvement in the method of imparting instruction to men. Why then may we not suppose that such a book as God could make, would also be an improvement on their productions? Suppose then God to qualify certain men, to declare the same system of truth to the world through the medium of written language; suppose him to give the most indubitable proofs that they are thus qualified and commissioned by God himself for this work; let us suppose the book actually written, containing simply that system of truth which the light of nature discloses, presenting these sublime doctrines concerning God--his nature, his character; the great facts respecting man--his nature, his character, his destiny; his relations to him, promulgating the great law of God's moral government in its perfect requirement; its diverse specific precepts, its high and awful sanctions; making known an economy of mercy, unfolding with new clearness a future state with its regions of immortality in bliss and woe let us suppose this system of truth set forth to the human mind in all the simplicity, perspicuity, force, and conclusiveness of which human language admits; by argument, illustration, exemplification; shown to us in real life, embodied in rites of worship, and carried out in all the forms of human action; presented in history, poetry, parables, allegory, epistles--in every conceivable form fitted to render it intelligible, impressive; easy to be fixed in the memory, and ready for use at all times; accessible to all minds, fitted to all classes of men in all circumstances and relations; capable of being brought in all its clearness and power on the human mind, from the beginning of moral and accountable agency, and ever and

always from its own pages, as well as through its ordinances and appointed ministry, pouring its light over a world like the sun in midheaven. Suppose God to give such a book to this world, having that perfection which his own inspiration could give it, would it be no valuable addition to the mere light of nature? Would such instruction from God possess no value? Would this light from heaven, truth enforced by the authority of God, the very testimony of the living God, be nothing? Would it be nothing to man that his God should speak to him? Or, is such a revelation from God absolutely necessary to give the highest conceivable perfection to the mode of discovering religious and moral truth to the human mind? Let any honest man who understands the use and power of language answer this question.

(2.) A divine revelation is necessary to secure to any extent, the practical influence of religious and moral truth on the human mind.

In support of this position I shall attempt to show, that such an experiment has been made, as to prove, that the great end of man's creation would be entirely defeated without a revelation from God. In other words, facts enable us to decide what the human intellect would accomplish in the discovery of religious and moral truth, and what would be the practical results under the mere light of nature; and that these discoveries and results show that the moral reformation of men would never be accomplished to any considerable extent, without a divine revelation.

The question is not as to the sufficiency of this light, but as to its actual efficacy in leading men to duty and to happiness. HAS IT IN FACT EVER DONE IT?

I appeal then in the first place, to the ancient heathen philosophers. And here I might say, there is great reason to believe that nothing in the writings of these philosophers, of the least value either in theology or morals, was strictly the result of their own mental efforts. Many of them confess that they derived their knowledge from very ancient traditions, to

which they assigned a divine origin. "What Socrates said of the deity," observes Dryden, "what Plato writ, and the rest of the heathen philosophers of several nations, is all no more than the twilight of revelation, after the sun of it was set in the race of Noah;" while the Christian fathers furnish abundant proof that Plato especially learned much from the Hebrews while he was in Egypt. Of Zoroaster, of whom deists have had much to say, it has been shown by Dr. Hyde in his treatise "*De Religione Veterum Persarum*," that Zoroaster had been a disciple of one of the Jewish prophets, and that all the writings ascribed to this philosopher are unquestionably spurious. I cannot but add here the apparent prediction, but yet real conjecture of Plato, founded probably on the traditions and truths he derived from the Jews in Egypt. He says, "We cannot know of ourselves what petition will be pleasing to God, or what worship to pay him, but that it is necessary that a lawgiver should be sent from heaven to instruct us;" and such a one did he expect; and "oh," says he, "how greatly I do desire to see that man and who he is!" He goes further, and declares this lawgiver must be more than a man, "for since every nature is governed by another nature that is superior to it, as birds and beasts by man, he infers that this lawgiver who was to teach man what he could not know by his own nature, must be of a nature superior to man--that is, of a divine nature." He gives indeed, as lively a picture of the person, qualifications, life, and death of this divine man, as had he been acquainted with the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. He says "that this just person must be poor, and void of all recommendations but that of virtue alone; that a wicked world would not bear his instructions and reproof; and that therefore within three, or four years after he began to preach he should be persecuted, imprisoned, scourged, and at last be put to death." Would it then be strange if all in the writings of Plato and other ancient philosophers, which has been held up to our admiration, should have been directly or indirectly derived from divine revelation?

Laying aside however, this consideration, and conceding all that can be claimed in respect to the unaided powers of the ancient philosophers, let us inquire what they actually accomplished in morals and religion. The answer must be admitted to be decisive upon the point before us. The fact appealed to, is that of the employment of the most powerful human

intellects on this subject, with unparalleled devotion, and under the highest advantages. Who will pretend that more would ever be accomplished in this department of human knowledge, under the mere light of nature, than was done by Socrates, Plato, Seneca, Cicero, and other eminent philosophers of antiquity? When has the world seen, when could it expect to see, men of brighter genius, of higher intellectual power, of superior literary accomplishment, of such unrivaled industry, toil, and self-consecration too, in philosophic research? Whatever may be thought of the intellectual stature of Bolingbroke, Gibbon, Hume, and Voltaire, they appear diminutive compared with these giants of the Academy and the Lyceum.

What then did these philosophers accomplish? What for themselves, and what for the world?

And here we have no occasion to deny any excellence or impute any imperfection or defect which is not real, in their systems of philosophy. It is conceded then that passages may be found which seem to express exalted conceptions of God and of some of his attributes. In some of their moral codes, particularly in the Ethics of Aristotle and the Offices of Cicero, some beautiful theories of morals and precepts fitted for the regulation of external conduct are to be found. Some of them admit that virtue is the chief good and its own reward; and some of them, at times at least, indulged in sublime speculations respecting the nature and immortality of the soul. But after all, what was the amount of their knowledge or belief on these great subjects, and what were the actual results to them and to the world?

While some of these philosophers asserted the being of God, others openly denied it; few, probably none of them believed God, in the proper sense, to be the Creator of the world; most of them were polytheists, and all of them either sincerely or hypocritically sanctioned, defended, and practiced idolatrous worship, and enjoined it as the duty of every citizen.

In respect to a future state, whatever may be said of their arguments, the best of the philosophers spoke DOUBTFULLY; none of them applied the fact to its proper use and end; most of them entertained of it the most puerile and contemptible conceits. They did believe in future punishment, and their ideas of future rewards were so indefinite, low, and sensual, as to give no importance to their faith. In short, as to the merit and demerit of right and wrong moral action, the happiness and misery in kind and degree of which the soul is capable, a just judgment of a righteous God, and the grand and awful idea of accountability--they believed nothing--or at least entertained conceptions so inadequate and so false as to amount to nothing.

In respect to morals, nothing like a true system was to be found in the writings of any one of them, nor of all of them together. On the great, the vital question--in fact the only question--viz., in what does the supreme happiness of man consist, Varro tells us that there were three hundred different opinions among the philosophers. Cicero says, that these opinions were so numerous and discordant that it is impossible to enumerate them; while it may be added, that in respect to the true nature of moral excellence--viz., disinterested love true benevolence either in God or man--no one of them seems to have formed a conception. Where this is not understood, it is in vain to talk of morals, of piety, or religion. Every thing is wrong in principle. Call it by what names you will, ascribe to it what restraining and regulating power you will on the conduct of the life, it is nothing but the selfish principle, the sum and essence of all moral evil. Did these philosophers then ever teach intelligibly and truly, that love to God and love to man is the sum and substance of all moral excellence?--that love is the fulfilling of the law--and that all else without it is in a moral respect nothing but sin? So far as I can find, never in any decisive instance, while, with the exception of a few, instead of inculcating the expression of this principle in loving enemies and forgiving injuries, they accounted revenge lawful and commendable. Pride and ambition (principles which have caused more wretchedness on earth than any other), were esteemed the best incentives to virtuous and noble deeds. Suicide was deemed lawful, and a proof of true heroism. Lying lawful, when profitable; theft, adultery, fornication, infanticide, cruelty to children, inhumanity to slaves, degradation of the female sex, gratification

of sensual appetite and unnatural lusts; in a word, the most flagitious practices were countenanced on the part of the philosophers, both by argument and example.

Even the doctrines of the wisest and best, notwithstanding the slight hints or the faint and transient glimpses of truth they include, were as a whole, uncertainty, darkness, jargon, puerility. What truth concerning God, his character, law, government; or concerning man, his character, his relations, his prospects, at all fitted in its combination with error, to give any just or adequate conception of either God or man, or to reform a lost world? The answer is given in matter of fact. Philosophers, statesmen, poets, priests, and people, were avowedly addicted to the most abominable uncleannesses and crimes; the gods they worshiped were guilty of the same enormities, their sacrifices were deformed with cruelty and the most horrid rites; their sacred groves were consecrated to prostitution, their temples were brothels. Think of such worship rendered to the three hundred Jupiters mentioned by Varro, or to the three hundred and sixty-five gods mentioned by Orpheus, or to thirty thousand by Hesiod--gods celestial, aerial, terrestrial, and infernal; gods worshiped by rites profane, cruel, debauched; gods worshiped by shameless prostitution and the immolation of human victims! With this entire corruption of all religion was of course connected an equal corruption of morals both in public and private life. Fraud, theft, injustice, suicide, adultery, fornication, systematic abortions, murder of infants, and the most unnatural crimes, ambition, hatred, and fell revenge; gladiatorial shows, and all the atrocious cruelties of war and rapine not only abounded but were patronized, countenanced, authorized by law, connived at and practiced by statesmen and philosophers, and publicly reprobated by none. From this source, the corruption of all religion and morals, aided by the depravity of the human heart, flowed forth a torrent of crimes and abominations desolating a world of all that is good and happy in virtue and religion, and leaving all, all in moral darkness and moral death. Its state became more and more hopeless as time rolled on. Even in the land of Judea the last feeble rays of divine truth were almost extinct, while this vast portentous cloud hung over the nations, thickening, darkening, and foreboding only the blackness of darkness forever.

I now ask, whether God has not made a sufficient experiment on the question, what human reason would accomplish in the discovery of religious and moral truth, and what would be the practical results under the mere light of nature? What reason or shadow of reason is there to believe that modern deists, or any other men, or any individual man, under the more light of nature, and to the end of time, would have become wiser or better than Socrates, Plato, Seneca, or Cicero? When or where has human genius shone more brightly, or the power and majesty of the human intellect more excited our admiration and wonder than in the poets, the orators, the legislators, the philosophers of antiquity? And when, to the end of the world, could we hope for better results in the discovery of moral truth in the formation of moral character? What then could be hoped for from philosophy, from human reason, under the mere light of nature? Is not the experiment absolutely decisive? Is not the necessity of a divine revelation to secure to any extent the salutary practical influence of religious and moral truth on the human mind, placed beyond all denial?

In confirmation of this argument, if it can need any, we might appeal to many other considerations. So far as there was any thing really commendable in the instructions of the philosophers, they were delivered to their immediate pupils, and in no respect to the great mass of the community. Indeed, their ethical systems were far too refined for the common people; their discourses being rather subtle disputations, where truth was left obscure, doubtful, and subject to controversy. Nothing was settled. What one affirmed, another denied. What could be expected of the common people, when the penetration and the labors of the philosophers resulted in disagreement, contradiction, and uncertainty? Allow that they discovered and proved some truths in speculation, what authority could they give them in practice? What philosopher could secure submission to his rules of life; or what can human law effect in the renovation of the heart? "Your systems of virtue," says Tertullian, "are but the conjectures of human philosophy, and the power which commands is merely human; so that neither the rule nor the power is indisputable, and hence the one is too imperfect to instruct us fully, the other too weak to command us effectually; but both these are effectually provided for by a

revelation from God. Where is the philosopher that can so clearly demonstrate the true good as to fix the notion beyond dispute? And what human power is able to reach the conscience and bring down that notion into practice? Human wisdom is as liable to error as human power is to contempt." What would be the influence of a system of truth coming from man, compared with that of the same system clothed with God's authority? In addition to all this, let the idolizers of human reason remember that the wisest of the ancient philosophers and legislators were fully convinced, by their own experience, on the great question. Socrates and Plato both confessed that they needed a divine revelation to instruct them in matters of the greatest consequence. Cicero and others, instead of the vain conceits of some modern deists respecting the powers of man employed in religious and moral inquiries, often acknowledged their imbecility and darkness. These great men were so impressed with the actual state of the world, and the waywardness and corruption of the human heart, that they not only often acknowledged that there were no human means of reformation, but expressed a strong hope and expectation, that God would one day give to man a revelation that should dispel the dark cloud in which the human mind was involved. In short, it is notorious that nearly the whole system of religion and of worship, with its sanctions of future rewards and punishments, with its oracles, divinations, mysteries, were in fact political expedients, useful fictions, originated and perpetuated by legislators, from the necessity of keeping the people in awe, and under greater veneration for human laws. If the world could stand without a real revelation, experience had proved at least one thing, that it could not stand without a pretended revelation from God. After such an experiment then, an experiment which left the world in a most deplorable condition of darkness, crime, and wretchedness; an experiment which convinced the very men that made it of its utter inefficacy; which actually led them to abandon all hope of the world's reformation without a revelation from God, and which actually compelled them to resort to the pretense of such a revelation, to give even any salutary restraining influence to human law; I say, who after such an experiment can doubt the absolute necessity of a revelation from God, to secure to any extent the reforming influence of moral truth on the human mind?

One brief reflection! What a value does the view we have taken of this world, of the ignorance, the depravity, the crimes, the miseries of mankind in every age and in almost every country for six thousand years, give to Christianity, and this, whether it be a revelation from God or not. Who will not read and study the Bible, whether he be an infidel or a Christian? Christianity, as a system of morals, whether it be of God or not, is true. Here, here, it gives light where all was uncertainty, confusion, darkness, without it. Here, where the thickest gloom of moral midnight overspread a lost world, it comes as the morning sun to remove the darkness and reveal the day. Nor is this all. In its proposed way of our acceptance with an offended God, if there is any way--I mean in the general form of an atonement for sin--it is also true. The great question then, in every substantial respect, is not between Christianity and Infidelity, but between Christianity and nothing. If Christianity is false, Infidelity is false. Reject the morals of Christianity as false, and all here is midnight. We can know nothing to be true. Reject also the great fact of some atonement for sin, under the government of a just and perfect God, and there is no mercy, no hope. Oh, how would Socrates, how would Plato, have hailed such light as this! Who that has it shall despise it? Who will not study, understand, apply, such truth as the Bible contains? Whose eye will not weep, and whose heart not break, that a fellow-creature, a friend, a companion, is not willing to read this book and weigh with candor the evidence of its origin from God? Oh! what maniac madness to sport on the verge of eternity, with the dream that Christianity is false--an immortal mind, denying such truth, and attempting to sustain and cheer itself, as it were, at the foot of God's judgment-seat, with the empty, vapid declamation about the sufficiency of human reason--and this with the knowledge of the fact, that for six thousand years this boasted human reason has only plunged a lost world into error, sin, and death, without hope! And if all these were without excuse, what will, what must become of the man who will not love the truth, and embrace the truth, and obey the truth, which he knows Christianity reveals?

LECTURE XII: Revelation necessary to secure the practical influence of the truth.

Argument for necessity of revelation continued: Prop. 2 continued --

Revelation necessary to secure the practical influence of the truth. -- Argued from the state of Pagan nations at present. -- From the Influence of Deism. -- Deists greatly indebted to Christianity. -- The influence of their systems is feeble, scanty and uncertain, denies the holiness and justice of God. -- Their views of sin and repentance defective. -- Their morality superficial. -- Men are not made better by them. -- Little zeal for reforming men by them. -- Give no comfort in death. -- Prop. 3. Revelation necessary to make known truth undiscoverable without It. -- Conclusion.

IN continuing the argument for the necessity of a divine revelation to any useful discovery of truth, I appeal --

In the second place, to the state of pagan nations at the present time.

This point needs no illustration. The facts on this subject are familiar to all, and, they carry with them their own inferences.

In the third place, I appeal to the influence of Deism. It is claimed by that class of philosophers called deists, that the book of nature is the only book to be studied, or that deism as a system derived from human reason under the light of nature, is all that is requisite actually to instruct and guide the world in respect to religion and morals.

My first remark on this part of the subject is, that this class of philosophers, have derived the best parts of their system from the very revelation which they reject and affect to despise. Let it then be conceded, that in their system of faith there is much truth concerning God and concerning man. Truth, which human reason rightly employed might and would discover under the mere light of nature. But it is one thing to grant that these doctrines of deism are discoverable, and quite another to affirm, that they have been actually discovered by the light of nature. What then is the fact? It is here to be remarked, that the name of deist

was unknown till about the year 1565, when Christianity had been in the world more than fifteen centuries. How then did it happen, that Socrates, and Plato, and Aristotle, and all the wisest philosophers groped in such darkness during so many ages, and that this purified and perfect system of truth called deism, should be first discovered and taught by men who lived and were educated under the meridian sun of Christianity? Had these men at this period of the world, made such advances in knowledge as to leave the philosophers of Greece and Rome and all other nations out of sight, and to be able effectually to guide themselves and the rest of the world by their own reason? Can they lay claim to superior genius or mental culture; or did the light of nature shine brighter on them than on all who lived before? This cannot be pretended. No; what they knew, and all they knew, more than was known and taught by the sages of antiquity, they learned from God's revelation. Christianity had shamed away the grosser errors and vices of the pagan philosophy, and shed its blazing light so intensely on the mind, as to compel men as it were to see its perfect system of moral and religious truth, and to adopt so much of it as to shield them from contempt. They stole a torch from the temple of God and called it the light of their own reason. The fact cannot be mistaken--the pretension to discovery is ridiculous. As well might a New Zealander residing among the discoveries in the arts and sciences made in Christendom for the last hundred years, pretend to be their sole author. Are not such pretensions to discovery from the light of nature ridiculous, contemptible, beyond all possible respect?

But I will waive this point, and ask, what is this system of truth which is to accomplish so much for the moral reformation of the world? No one can tell what it is! To whom shall we apply--where shall we find it? Shall we resort to the deistical writers en masse and listen to their instructions? But the ear is stunned with contradiction, inconsistency, disagreement, controversy, mutual censure and recrimination without end. When it must be optional in the highest sense with, all to adopt one or another or none of these systems, what is to be expected but the same jargon among the disciples, as prevails among the masters; or rather, what but the rejection of every system? Or if everyone is to read and judge for himself what will be the consequence but confusion, compared with which that of Babel were harmony of sweetest music? Who that knows any thing of man, or

of the experience of past ages, will not regard as perfectly ridiculous the scheme of bringing this world to receive any system even of truth, which has no higher authority than that of human reason.

But further, without insisting on this fatal obstacle, there is yet another. Their system can possess no authority, not even that of reason itself. The most perfect systems of deism consists in these particulars, that there is one God possessing infinite natural and moral perfection; that God is to be worshiped and served in the forms of piety and of virtue; that God will forgive our sins against him on condition of repentance; and that he will reward the good and punish the bad in a future state. Now I readily admit that these propositions are all true, in their proper import, and that they can all be proved to be true, by human reason. But what I now maintain is, that the infidel cannot, by reason, prove any one of them to be true. He cannot, because he denies the premises by which alone these propositions can be thus proved to be true. He denies the justice of God, the equity of his moral administration over this world; and, denying this, he can prove nothing concerning God or man of the nature of religious or moral truth arising out of the character of God, or the relations between God and man. Denying that God is just as a moral governor, he cannot prove that God is benevolent. Denying that perfect benevolence in God involves in its very nature exact and perfect justice, he denies the very nature of benevolence; he denies an essential element of all moral rectitude, and utterly subverts the distinction between right and wrong. The God of Infidelity then is not, and cannot be, a benevolent God, but is and must be a selfish and malignant deity. This spoils alike its entire system of theology and of morals. A God of such a character cannot have the least claim to any worship or service from man either in the form of piety or virtue. With such a view of God, there can be no love, no confidence, no gratitude, no piety, no virtue toward him, for there, is no fit object of these affections. All moral relations between him and his moral creation are subverted. Moral obligation, obedience, disobedience, sin, duty, can have no place. Where is moral obligation? Such a God has no right to command. Where is obedience or disobedience? He has no authority. Where is the standard of duty? The will of God is the will of a selfish or malignant being. Where is the object of one right affection? God is exhibited only as an object of abhorrence and of dread. Where is sin

against God? It were sinful to love, and right to hate such a being. Where is repentance? There is no cause for contrition in the past, and no return to duty for the future. Where is forgiveness? There is nothing to be forgiven. Where is the ground of trust or hope? The vain illusion that a selfish being, who is more likely to destroy than to promote the interests of his creatures, may prove indulgent through partiality or favoritism. Where the prospect of immortality? No purpose or plan of God, no designs either of justice or mercy, require a future state for their accomplishment. Where are rewards and punishments? All are a mockery--at best the expressions of unjust lenity or unjust severity. Where is religion; where is virtue; where is the principle of recovery from the gulf of moral ruin; where is relief for the alarmed conscience; where is mercy, peace, hope, heaven; where is a perfect God? All is a blank. Indeed, a system of religion which denies THE GREAT RELATION OF GOD as the righteous moral governor of men, is all error, all delusions. It is worse than not true. It is most fearfully false. It is worse than nothing, worse than any thing. The God of such a system can be viewed in the light of truth only under two aspects, as the patron of iniquity, or all omnipotent tyrant. No God at all were better than the God of Infidelity. What man not already the hopeless victim of his wrath, would not wish that God were benevolent, though benevolence involves perfect justice. Under any other idea of him, there is nothing but that which in wanton malice patronizes iniquity with all its woes or tortures, nothing but that which is fitted to overwhelm with terror. Such then are the unavoidable results which reason gives from the premises of the infidel. If we can suppose him inconsistent enough to believe any thing better himself, he cannot prove it to be true, he cannot enforce it on the minds of other men by the authority of reason. He must give up his premises, and admit the great fact of A JUST GOD, or abandon all pretense to reasoning. His premises do not give his conclusions, but others which are opposite and appalling. What then can be hoped for, from a system of reason in which there is no reason? Will the world be reformed by a system of faith professedly founded in reason, and yet so obviously built on falsehood? Vain is the dream. Deism, with all the seeming, comeliness of its most unexceptionable form, has, according to its own principles, no warrant, no authority, from human reason. It is an utterly baseless system.

But I have another inquiry to make concerning this system: viz., WHAT IS IT? The deist--at least a few deists--professes to believe that there is a perfect God; that he is to be worshiped and served by piety and virtue; that he will forgive our sins on condition of repentance; and that good men will be rewarded and bad men punished in a future state.

This, so far as it goes, sounds well in words, but what does he believe concerning God? He tells us he is good. But what is goodness in God? We have seen that it is that sentimental tenderness, that indulgent lenity that sacrifices the general good to individual happiness; goodness that does not abhor the supreme evil, goodness that refuses to adopt the best means of the best end. Does the infidel then believe in God as he is? Does he conceive of him in the glory of that holiness which recoils from sin with supreme and eternal indignation, in the glory of that justice which will maintain his law, uphold his throne, sustain the interests of holiness, and express his supreme and immutable abhorrence of sin, though it involves the eternal destruction of a rebel universe? Who does not know, that all such exhibitions of God, are, in the view of infidels, repulsive, odious, intolerable falsehood? Who does not know, that they can tolerate no idea of God but that which exhibits him as more concerned for the happiness of his creatures than for their virtue; that view of God, which represents him as entirely dispensing with the eternal nature, relations, and dependencies of things; and therefore as sacrificing the interests and the principles of righteousness to make his creation happy, by which he must inevitably make that creation wretched; that view of God which exhibits him in the glory of his mercy, sacrificing his justice, in the plenitude of his goodness as a tender, indulgent friend and patron of iniquity--a selfish malignant deity? Such is the good, the benevolent, the perfect God of Infidelity! I ask here, are these words merely, and not things? The same hollow emptiness, the same meaningless nothing, or rather the same fearful falsehood characterizes every part of the infidel's creed. What is sin? A venial evil--the merest trifle--nay, rather, so far as it exists, the best means of the best end! What greater practical error than to believe, the worst kind of moral action to be the best kind of moral action?

Where is the true exhibition of the nature and tendency of sin against God, as hostility to him and all good and the source of absolute and universal woe; as the subversion of God's law, his government, his throne, his kingdom, as the destruction of all good--yea, of God himself, as the infallible source of misery, unmingled, complete, eternal. Are such the views of the true nature and tendency of sin which Infidelity gives us? Nothing like it. They are, of all things, the views which infidels most abhor. That sin is such an evil, involving such fell destruction, such guilt or ill-desert, and that a perfect God must feel and act toward it accordingly, is, in their estimation, the most incredible of all nonsense. These views of sin are the false, absurd, austere, gloomy, self-torturing views of hair-brained fanatics.

With such conceptions of God as the infidel entertains, what must that be which he calls piety? Can love, reverence, confidence, submission, gratitude, joy, be exercised toward the God of Infidelity? How preposterous. Can every thing be taken away from the character of God which awakens dread and disturbance when sinful beings think of heaven's Sovereign; can every moral attribute of the Godhead be amalgamated into one--that of unqualified tenderness; can all that is venerable and awful in God be sunk into that which is so grateful to the rebel; with such a view of God can the heart of his worshiper feel the holy reverence and awful love which are due to a perfect God? True piety, in all the sacredness and solemnity of devout emotion, adoring the tender, sentimental, weak-hearted God of Infidelity! When does the infidel contemplate God in his true character, that awful goodness which connects misery with sin, and welcome the aspect of such a God? When does he look upon that august and inviolable sanctuary, where the fires of his indignation forever burn to guard the approach of the least moral pollution, and adore, and love, and praise, with grateful and exulting joy? We all know that such a God is the object of aversion and ridicule, and even of blasphemy, with infidels. All their piety, all their joy in God, is, and can be, nothing but those selfish, sordid emotions which are founded in the belief that an unprincipled deity will be indulgent to them in their rebellion.

And further; what is that which the infidel calls repentance? Not sorrow for sin as it is--not as hostility to God, and the frustration of his designs; not sorrow for sin, as that which in the estimation of God and of truth, deserves his wrath in the endless misery of the sinner. But rather, it is regret for a trivial evil, for that toward which God feels no supreme abhorrence, but which he on the whole prefers to its opposite--sorrow in a word, for that which in their estimation and in that of God, is the best means of the best end, with a determination to forsake it! And as to future rewards, what are these--what is the heaven of Infidelity? Nothing positive, nothing definite, a general undefined state of happiness irrespective of moral character. It may be the heaven of Mohammed, or it may be the blissful elysium of heathen poetry, or a paradise of earthly sweets in some other form. But it is not a world of happiness, because sin is not there, and because holiness is there reigning in all its purity and its joys. The happiness of the infidel's heaven is not that which is peculiar to holy spirits in communion with a holy God. It is any thing but a perfect God in fellowship with creatures bearing his perfect image. And what is future punishment Not a supreme and endless misery inflicted as the expression of the wrath of God against sin; but at most paternal chastisement, disciplinary evil, kind inflictions to reform and to save; evil inflicted according to the exigency, so that they who are not reformed by less shall be reformed by more, so that rebellion itself, much as it may abhor the service of God, shall be compelled by dint of suffering to surrender to God's authority, and thus to serve him at best with a rebel heart. No other motive, nothing but the compulsory influence of natural evil is thought of or presented. Thus it is that Infidelity in its fairest form is plausible in words only. In respect to truth, it means nothing which it seems to mean. It knows nothing of God as he is--nothing of holiness or of sin, of piety, virtue, repentance, or of the nature of those influences by which alone moral beings can be governed and blessed. All it means under its fair show of words is error the most destructive. And in further confirmation on this point, I appeal to any man acquainted with the writings or the character of infidels, and ask, is there a more palpable solecism than a pious infidel--a devout, spiritual, heavenly-minded infidel?

If now we appeal to Infidelity's code of morals, what is it? True morality is

in the heart. Men talk of good morals. What are they? Benevolence in the heart; love to God and love to man. Holiness, a spiritual principle, which as much surpasses all that infidels call morality as a living man does a dead man. In all the writings then of infidels, I fearlessly affirm, that the inculcation of the great, the true, the only principle of morality cannot be found. It follows of course, that whatever else may be true of their system, it includes not the slightest tendency to reform men in respect to morality. In most if not in all cases, there is an open and avowed contempt for many of the particular virtues which adorn the character of man as a social being, and which are essential to the happiness of an earthly community. At the same time the most heartless, sordid selfishness is inculcated in many forms, and many of the most degrading and destructive vices, with an almost unlimited indulgence of the sensual appetites, are countenanced and even formally vindicated. A few testimonies from the least exceptionable of deistical writers must suffice on this topic. Lord Herbert asserts that lust and anger are no more to be blamed than the thirst occasioned by the dropsy, or the drowsiness produced by lethargy. Mr. Hobbes, that the civil law is the only foundation of right and wrong--that every man has a right to all things, and may lawfully get them if he can. Lord Bolingbroke resolves all morality into self-love, meaning selfishness, and teaches that ambition, the lust of power, sensuality and avarice may be lawfully gratified if they can be safely, that man lives only in the present world, that the chief end of man is to gratify the appetites and inclinations of the flesh, that adultery is no violation of the law of nature, that polygamy is a part of this law, and modesty is inspired by prejudice or vanity. Mr. Hume maintained that self-denial and humility are not virtues, but are useless and mischievous, and that pride, self-valuation, &c., are objects of moral approbation, that adultery must be practiced if men would obtain all the advantages of life, and if practiced secretly and frequently would be no crime at all! But I need not go into further details. Substantially the same things or worse, are to be found in all this class of writers of most distinction.

If now we refer to their characters, we shall see that in their practice they gave proof of their faith. Lord Herbert, Hobbes, Lord Shaftsbury, Woolston, Tindal, Chubb, Lord Bolingbroke, Collins, were all guilty of the vilest hypocrisy and lying on the face of their publications; professing in

words high respect for Christianity, while they felt toward it the most deadly hate, wearing a mask of friendship that they might stab it to the heart. The morals of Rochester and Wharton were notoriously degraded. Woolston was a blasphemer; Blount was a suicide; Tindal and Morgan were shameless hypocrites. Voltaire was an adulterer, and as famous for falsehood, treachery, envy, profligacy, low sensuality and cruelty, as for his exalted talents. Rousseau, by his own published confession, was a thief, a liar, and a debauchee. Thomas Paine, than whom perhaps no one has done more by his writings to extend Infidelity in this country and in Europe, was infamous for his hostility, to all morals and all religion, for his impiety, blasphemy, licentiousness and adultery, and sunk at last into all the filth and wretchedness of a sot; an object of pity and contempt to his own deluded disciples.

In presenting these examples, I do not pretend that every deist has been thus degraded by open vice and immorality. Doubtless there are cases in which pride, respect for character, literary ambition, and other causes have predominated over the grosser appetites; but in many of these an avowed hostility to the true principle of morals, a ridicule of the milder virtues, an extreme indifference and selfishness in respect to the best interests of man, have varied the aspect without lessening the guilt of their principles or their conduct. Nor let it here be said that some of the professed disciples of Christianity have also been depraved and wicked men. We admit it. But this we reply, is notwithstanding Christianity--it is in spite of it, not its effect; while the wickedness and the profligacy of professed infidels are the genuine fruits and effects of their religion itself. The proof from facts is decisive. Such has been the character of the teachers of the one system almost without an exception, while the contrary, character has been that of the teachers of the other, with almost no exception. In respect to the disciples of the two systems, in the one case a hundred to one have been openly wicked and profligate, in the other not one in a hundred has been.

Again; infidels themselves do not believe in the salutary, reforming tendency of their own system. What have they done, I do not say to propagate their faith, but to propagate it for practical, reforming

purposes? what, to secure any useful practical influence on the human mind? Is it not notorious that the grand, the supreme object, end, and aim of this class of men, has been to pull down and destroy Christianity, and to set up Infidelity in its stead? Is it not a fact that Infidelity, so far as it comprises truth in words, is a mere show, an empty pretense of truth, brought forward only as matter of display in argument; never as having any practical bearing on the conscience; never exhibited as a system embodying obligations, persuasives, motives--the least tendency or power to reclaim from sin and death -- but used as an imposing semblance of truth--a foil to set off and commend the most destructive error. Does the infidel care what men believe, provided only that they do not believe Christianity? Or rather, so far as he teaches any thing positive, does he not inculcate false views of God, of his character, of his relations; and false views of man, his duty, his character, his prospects? Is it not a system to console rather than disturb human wickedness? Where are the truths brought forth for practical purposes which are taught by the light of nature itself? Where, in the writings or addresses of this class of men, is God presented to the human mind as he is--God in his holiness, his justice, or even in his mercy, for practical purposes; where do you find any exhibition of sin as it is, in its true moral deformity, turpitude, and odiousness; repentance in its ingenuous relentings, its godly contrition, brokenness of heart, and abhorrence of all sin; of the graces of humility, meekness, forgiveness, active beneficence, with the self-denial and self-government which they involve; where any exhibition of the rewards of the righteous and the punishments of the wicked pressed on the hopes and the fears of men as incentives to piety and virtue? Where is there any assault on corrupting error save that of Christianity, or any defence of truth, except that Christianity is false. Where is truth (I speak of truth taught by the light of nature), developed by illustration, defended and confirmed by argument, and pressed home on the bosoms and business of men in its practically reforming power; where are the sinful practices of men exposed and condemned; where are the corrupt principles of the human heart, its selfishness, deceitfulness, its lusts and inordinate passions, its worldliness, pride, and rebellion against God laid open; where is the law of God in its broad and spiritual demands unfolded; where is the full-length portrait of man drawn as a sinner against God without excuse, and without hope save in the mercy of a just God--mercy without merit, mercy that can save while justice can destroy; where is the entreaty and the expostulation, the

earnest solicitude, the beseeching tenderness, the faithful reproof, that true-hearted kindness that consults not the passions but the welfare of men, not their inclinations but their duties, that offends rather than deceives, that utters painful truth rather than flatters to destruction, that humbles, and rebukes, and wounds, rather than not save; where is the study, and the toil, and the prayers, the compassion, the tears, that become a reformer of fellow-beings ruined for eternity? Where are their Baxters, and Leightons, and Doddridges, their Edwardses, and Davieses? A death-like silence answers. There is not one Christian book that does not contain the essential elements of moral truth, illustrated, applied, enforced; you cannot find one infidel book that does. What signifies then all this pretense of infidels about reforming the world by the light of reason? If there is truth in their system, fitted and sufficient to reform and save their fellow-creatures from the doom of sin, and if they sincerely believe it, why not bring it forth for this high purpose, and go abroad on this errand of salvation with that apostolic zeal, self-denial, and devotedness which become such a cause. Sin still maintains its dark and gloomy dominion, with scarcely an exception, throughout this wicked world, frowning resistance and defiance against God and goodness.

Why, as true men and good men, do they not open their powerful battery of truth, and make their artillery thunder on the strongholds of sin and death? Honest men, believing that they have the means of such a triumph, and yet doing nothing! Friends of God and of man, true-hearted philanthropists, do you believe that Infidelity will reform and save a lost world; then apply it to that purpose, show your faith, your works. In the name of truth and reason let us have the experiment. Oh, but Christianity is in the way. Then go where there is no Christianity. Christianity in the way? But Christianity, by their own confession, is the best, even a perfect system of morals. Why not then take TRUTH--TRUTH where they can find it. TRUTH, if the devil be the author of it; and carry, it forth in its enlightening, transforming, and saving power, upon this dark and wicked and dying world? The infidel sincere! An apostle of Infidelity loving the souls of men; truly believing that a lost world is to be reclaimed to God by deism; aiming to accomplish this end by this means! No. Every thing shows that his grand, his only object is, to destroy Christianity. He lives to annihilate its truths and to throw the reins loose on the neck of rebellion

against God. He hates Christianity. He hates its author; he lives with the watchword on his lips, "Crush the wretch;" and to any labors, undertaken and pursued from principle, for the glory of God and the salvation of men, he will not make the least pretension. Labors for the conversion and salvation of men! There is not an infidel who would not be ashamed of, and even resent, the imputation.

Once more, what have been the actual effects of Infidelity, the practical results on the human mind. I speak of its effects where it has been most successful in respect to its real object of displacing the influence of Christianity and securing the prevalence and legitimate results of its own principles. Here I might appeal to the testimony of that multitude who have been converted from Infidelity to Christianity; what is their conversion in every instance by their own frank confession but a conversion from sin to holiness--what is it in most cases but a conversion from vice, profligacy, hostility to all that is good--what but a resurrection from moral degradation and death? Facts innumerable of this kind betray the camp of the enemy--they show us the interior of this sepulcher. But has Infidelity any such facts to show--facts of men made better by renouncing Christianity for Infidelity? Converts to Infidelity from among devout and enlightened disciples of Christianity, confessing their guilt for having embraced it, confessing vice and crime, profligacy and debauchery as the results of receiving and obeying Christianity! Baxters, Leightons, Doddridges, Brainerds, Edwardses, such men in the integrity of their hearts renouncing the corrupting influence of Christianity for the sanctifying power of Infidelity? All the world knows the absurdity, the self-contradiction, the utter impossibility of such a thing; and know as well that the difference between Christianity and Infidelity is the difference between truth and error--truth that blesses and saves, and error that curses and destroys the souls of men--the difference between life and death.

What has been the reforming influence of Infidelity, of human reason rejecting Christianity, or perverting it, or obscuring its light? What was the cause of the decay and of an. almost utter extinction of religion and virtue among men, from the seventh to the sixteenth century? The corruption of

Christianity left the human mind to be governed by human reason and depraved morals, superstitions multiplied, heathenism revived under the garb of Christianity, spiritual tyranny was established, moral duties exchanged for vows, pilgrimages, austerities; God, his worship, his service forgotten; selfishness, vice, crime, a long, fearful night of woe. And what brought back the day? Was it Infidelity; was it human reason, unaided by revelation, or was it the book of God, reopened and republished by the reformers?

Take any period in this world's history and show when or where, in a solitary instance, Infidelity has ever raised the human mind from the gulf of ignorance and moral degradation; show where Infidelity first planted religion, or preserved it when planted, or revived it when it had declined, or purified it when it had been corrupted. Show the spot made bright and fruitful by its boasted irradiations of light. Where has it prevailed without producing darkness, sterility, and death? Need we speak of the actual experiment made in France not half a century ago? Need we refer to the corruption of all ranks of her people? Have we forgotten the goddess of reason, the temples of reason, the religion of reason, the abolition of the Sabbath, the proclamation of death as an eternal sleep, and God voted out of existence? Have we forgotten that the reign of reason was the reign of terror?

I only ask, on this part of our subject, what are the effects of Infidelity in the hour of death? This is the hour of truth and honesty. Now comes a grand catastrophe, and what is that religion worth which condemns, and deserts, and betrays the Soul at last. And what is the testimony then of dying infidels? In whatever manner infidels die, the testimony furnished by their deaths, though circumstantially different, is, on the main fact, substantially the same. How many are their confessions, that Infidelity has been only the cause of profligacy, crime, and ruin? How many criminals have avowed that Infidelity is the cause of the crimes expiated by their ignominious deaths! How many have imprecated curses on the hour in which they first saw an infidel book, or on the murderer of souls, who put it into their hands! But who has heard a dying Christian, lament or curse the day in which he believed. in his Saviour? How then does the

infidel die? Does he die in obdurate insensibility? Often. But what a state of mind to meet death with! What is the question now in a moment to be decided? Whether his soul, with its stupendous powers is to be blasted into annihilation, expanded to the fruition of its God, or filled with endless despair and woe. And this soul, callous to its every interest, indifferent to its God, without a prayer for mercy, repelling every thought, suppressing every emotion that becomes a dying immortal--yes, a cherished, hardened insensibility, on the brink of eternity, and so soon to meet the God of eternity--asleep, for aught he knows or cares, on the brink of everlasting damnation!

Does the infidel die in the pride and presumption which ventures on the footing of his merits to challenge the justice of his God? Thus died Rousseau claiming the favor of his Maker, and affirming that he returned him his soul pure and immaculate as he had received it! What a lie--what daring of God to his face!

Does the infidel die in the careless levity of cold-hearted skepticism? Mr. Hume is our example. He amuses himself. He reads perhaps Don Quixotte, or the Tales of Gen ii. He laughs at death, joking about Charon and his boat, and the fabled Styx, and playing at his favorite game of whist. And on his death-bed finishes, what?--his Essay on Suicide, vindicating self-murder. Thus dies the applauded hero of Infidelity! Thus David Hume fell into the hands of the living God! What an unnatural contempt of death and of the tribunal of the final Judge! Was it all pretense, or was it the brand of God's reprobation?

Or does the infidel die in the anguish of despair? How numerous the examples--how agonizing their cries! How did Paine die? Under the compulsive power of conscience he declared, "That if the devil ever had had an agent on earth, he had been one." When his infidel friends said to him, "You have lived like a man," (lived like a man!) "and we hope you will die like one!" he said to one near him, "You see what miserable comforters I have." To the woman whom he had seduced from her husband, her friends, her religion, he said, "The principles I have taught you will not bear you out." As death approached, he began to betray those terrors which before he laughed at. He would not be left alone night

nor day, nor suffer his attendant to be out of his sight, and often for a long time together would exclaim in anguish, "O Lord, help me! O Christ, help me!"

Look now at the death of Voltaire. This prince of infidels is overwhelmed with terror! What does he think now of his infidel friends? "It is you," said he, "who have brought me to my present state--begone! I could have done without you all." What now does he think of that Saviour he had pronounced "a wretch?" Alternately he blasphemes God, and supplicates his mercy exclaiming, "O Christ, O Jesus Christ!" till his friends flew from his bedside horror-struck, declaring the sight too terrible to be borne."

I have no time, nor is there need for comment. I have only to ask, does philosophy, does human reason in that form of it called Infidelity, supersede the necessity of a revelation from God? What is Infidelity? In its fairest form, it is a theft on revelation, and yet refusing to wear the garb it has stolen, except to cover its own nakedness and shame! It has no support in its real form, not the shadow of warrant from reason, but is a manifest defiance and contempt of all reason. It has no truth, no principles. It obliterates all distinction between right and wrong, and subverts the moral dominion of God. It denies his true character; it proposes to give him neither honor, love nor service; it despises holy affections, spiritual enjoyments, heavenly anticipations, and gives up the whole man to the dominion of the lower appetites, and the sensuality of earth and time. It forgets all connection with eternity and the God of eternity. Of heaven as a home, of eternal happiness in fellowship with God, it has no hope. Of hell as the place of his retributive wrath it has no fears. In a word, Infidelity is a total disruption of the human mind from the only living and true God--a wretched device for the indulgence of the worst propensities of a fallen spirit. Will such a system reform the world, or must we look to one which has upon it the stamp, the seal of truth, of God, of heaven?

I need only state the third proposition, viz.:

3. That a divine revelation is necessary to the discovery of some important truths which, man could not discover with, out it.

The important truths here referred to, are the doctrine of the Trinity, and those doctrines which depend on it, as the doctrine of atonement made by the Son of God, and the renewing influence of the Spirit of God.

In conclusion, allow me, my young friends, affectionately to entreat you to avoid Infidelity. I have briefly shown you what it is. Can it be true? Can it be true that man, a creature of God, and formed in his image, is left to live, and act, and die, under a system of faith, so fatal to the high end of his creation, so dishonorable to his Father in heaven, so full of dark despair to the soul? Let the infidel in his scorn for truth, and in the miserable pride of exalting beyond measure the light of reason, shut his eyes on the glories of Christianity. Let him hold up his feeble, fading taper kindled by the light of the sun of revelation; let him pretend that it is his own, and try to extinguish the very luminary at which he lighted it. But be not deceived. Be not so lost to reason, to conscience, to the known end of your being, so lost to all experience, to truth, to God and all real good, as to listen to this empty declamation about human reason. Follow him not in his infatuated wanderings. What does reason teach? Reason employed on the nature of things, of God, of man, of all moral truth. Reason employed on facts given in all experience. What does reason thus employed teach? That Infidelity as it is, is false--that Christianity, whether a revelation or not, as a moral system is true. Who does not feel his blood chill at that vain pride, that love of error and of sin, that can reject the moral system of Christianity, and treat with scorn and sarcasm and objection, a system so full of hope and peace and joy to his own guilty spirit? Who does not know that if he embraces Infidelity as a practical system, that his soul is lost, ruined, without help even from its God? Who does not know that eternal truth binds such a soul in chains of everlasting darkness, guilt and woe! Who does not know that in so doing he is playing at the desperate game of daring not only Almighty God, but everlasting truth? That he forms a hell in his own bosom, that God cannot bless and save such a self-ruined immortal?

Yield then to reason. Obey the truth. Put on this panoply, even the whole armor of God. Now in the beginning of life, in this season of temptation--in this condition of danger from the frivolity, the thoughtlessness, the vanity of youthful companions, remember God your Creator in the days of your youth. Religion is always an ornament. In youth it is a finish and a crown--it gives a charm to every accomplishment, a luster to every excellence; and "rich are the tints of that beauty, and sweet the fragrance of those blossoms on which in the morning of life the Lord God sheds down the dews of his blessing."

LECTURE XIII: Question to be decided by human reason. -- Limits of reason. -- Perversion of reason

DIRECT ARGUMENT. -- Question proposed. -- Preliminary remarks. -- 1. Question to be decided by human reason. -- Limits of reason. -- Perversion of reason -- 2. Rational to believe In divine origin of Christianity on low evidence. -- Relation of Christianity to our character and life. -- Conclusions from this principle -- a. Unjust to demand high degree of evidences. Shows the true cause of Infidelity--c. The most promising method of convincing men of the truth. -- d. The reasonableness of faith in unlearned men--3. Common facts and principles must be assumed by all parties as premises of argument. -- Illustrations. -- How common premises may be fixed and agreed on. -- Arguments stated in four propositions. -- First two have been previously proved.

THE inquiry now proposed is--

WHETHER THE SYSTEM OF RELIGION CONTAINED IN THE BIBLE IS FROM GOD?

Before however we enter into the investigation of this inquiry, there are some preliminary topics which deserve a brief consideration.

I remark then,

1. That the question proposed must be decided on the authority of human reason. Deistical writers have maintained that the belief of a divine revelation involves the renunciation of reason. This is a favorite topic with Bolingbroke, Voltaire, Hume, and many others. "Our most holy religion," says Mr. Hume, "is founded on faith not on reason; and it is a sure method of exposing it, to put it to such a trial as it is by no means fitted to endure." Well had it been for the cause of truth, had the professed friends of Christianity given no countenance to this sentiment. Every enlightened friend of revelation will and must disclaim it. Christianity on its own authority is a reasonable service, and its demand on all its disciples is, "Be ready always to give an answer to every one that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." Reason is our only guide in religion, in examining the evidences of a revelation, in ascertaining its import, in believing its doctrines, and in obeying its precepts. If there ever was a religion addressed to human reason, and insisting that its every claim be adjudged at this tribunal, that religion is Christianity. Reason and truth can never war with each other. Reason is that high and noble power, whose sole prerogative it is to discover truth, to weigh the evidence of truth and to receive it, and it is not in the nature of the human mind, to believe either what it does not understand, or what when understood, it regards as irrational or absurd. We may indeed very rationally believe that there is more in a thing than we understand. We may believe a fact, the mode, the how of which we do not comprehend, but then the mode, the how is not the object of our faith. Concerning this, having no understanding, we have and can have no faith.

The true use of reason in matters of religion can easily be apprehended, if we would remember two things--one is, that man is not omniscient, and the other that he knows something. Not being omniscient, there are things which he beyond the grasp of his intellect, which for aught he knows may be true or may be false, and in respect to such, while we have no evidence either of their truth or falsehood, reason forbids all faith. But if in respect to these things, evidence come to us, whether it be

by extending our vision by a telescope, or whether it be by sufficient testimony of men who have seen what we have not seen, or by visitors to our planet from some other parts of the universe--or whether it be by God himself, or by messengers from God. I say, if we have legitimate evidence respecting things, which from the limitation of our knowledge we must admit may be true, then on the basis of such evidence, reason requires faith. To a well authenticated message from God on such matters, reason in the act of unconditional surrender, appears in its true dignity, its highest glory. Who that knows what God is, can refuse to listen to a message which he believes comes from him? True, if we could suppose a well authenticated message from God delivering known falsehood, then the case would be altered. We should have opposing decisive evidence, truth opposing truth, reason in her own absolute infallibility giving opposite results--reason reduced to a quandary from which with all its boasted prowess there would be no deliverance--reason that is no longer reason, but a name, of worthlessness and contempt. But reason is now supposed to be in a condition in which it cannot be reason. The case supposed can never be, if there is such a thing as reason. The exercise of reason giving results, implies truth and the evidence of truth. There cannot be the former without the latter. A well authenticated message from God can no more deliver known falsehood, than two and two can be five. If it does, it is not from God; if it is from God it gives infallible truth. Reason then having ascertained that God speaketh, must deem it its highest honor to bow to his declaration with implicit confidence. To oppose such a message with fancies and theories of our own devising, is an infamous violation of reason's prerogative, by exalting shameless ignorance to her throne--and as to being rational or philosophical, is as ridiculous as was ever schoolman with his quiddities, or a Cartesian with his whirl-pools.

Further; while there are some things which fall without, there are others that fall within the limits of human knowledge and human judgment. The human mind can and must judge of the truth and falsehood of many things for itself, in entire independence of a revelation. And not only so, it can judge of truth and falsehood within given limits, and every item of its actual faith within these limits, shall be as truly rational as were man omniscient. The mind is made to know some things, and to believe some

things. To refuse to confide in faith, or those judgments which are given by evidence, is to throw away and in effect to annihilate one part of the mind itself, that on which man is doomed to place reliance more extensively than on any other; and he who does it, if he does not thereby in fact become, must expect in all equity to be esteemed, an idiot. This part of the mind is made to be used, and its results are as truly and properly to be confided in, as those of intuition or demonstration. Alan then to a great extent can judge of truth and falsehood, of possible and impossible things, of evidence, its kinds, its weight absolute and comparative--particularly, he can judge of the merit and demerit of testimony, as these depend on the character and circumstances of the witness, and on the subject matter of what he testifies. He can judge of and perceive the truth and falsehood of such credentials as the performance of a miracle or the fulfillment of a prophecy, he can judge of the signs of honesty and veracity, of dishonesty and imposture, of mental imbecility and strength, of credulity and incredulity, of soundness of mind, and fanatical or enthusiastic illusion and extravagance, as these are indicated in the manner, the style, the tone, the countenance, the intellectual operations, the benevolent design, the uncompromising principle, the undaunted constancy of the witness. He can judge to a great extent of fitnesses and adaptations, of the tendencies of the great principles of action in men and in God; of what is right, what is wrong, of what man is made for, of what he is, and what he ought to be. He can see what God is, what he has done and has not done, what he is doing, what he will do and what he will not do. All this to a great extent reason can do, has a right and is bound to do. Otherwise it matters not as to the rationality of our faith, whether we are Mahomedans, Boodhists, Infidels, or Christians. If reason can make no distinctions, discover no differences, confide in no judgments, it were as rational to be one thing as another, to confide in malignity as in benevolence, to receive the illusions of Satan as the inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

Human reason too can judge of the subject matter of testimony, and this in every respect in which it is important to a sound and rational conclusion. It can decide in some cases what can be true, and what cannot be true; and it can decide when it cannot decide either, and can thus assign a limit to its own decisions. It can settle the important

previous question, whether the subject matter of the testimony lies within its antecedent knowledge, or whether it does not. If it does not, but comes to us as information from a region which reason has not explored, and from its own limitations cannot explore, then reason can judge whether in its own nature it be credible or incredible. If incredible, it can and ought to reject it. If credible, it can then judge whether the allegation be sustained by evidence or not. If not thus sustained, then again it can and ought to reject it; if thus sustained, then why refuse to learn from one competent to instruct and entitled to confidence? Again, the subject matter may be within our antecedent knowledge, and cases of this kind may be supposed to be very diverse. It may be one in which the knowledge communicated is insignificant and worthless in itself, or in which its communication from heaven would be unnecessary and useless because already fully possessed and acted upon, or one in which the knowledge though highly useful is not possessed at all, or only partially and imperfectly, or in which the knowledge is possessed but perverted, and needs to be presented in some new and more impressive form, or it may be one in which the knowledge is attainable only, but not attained, and never will be, without such a mode of communication, or it may be one which shall be characterized by several of these facts. Of the subject matter, in all these respects human reason is competent to form the requisite judgment. On the contrary, the fact to be believed may be supposed to be utterly incredible in itself. For example, should the witness tell us that the planets do not revolve around the sun, that the sun itself does not shine, that the rivers do not run into the ocean, that the three angles of a triangle are not equal to two right angles, that a part is equal to the whole, or that man is a perfect being, loving God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself, we should and we ought at once to confront him with our philosophical demonstrations, our daily experience and observation, our own intuition and consciousness. Thus human reason can judge, has a right, and is bound to judge of each and every thing respecting a revelation which has, or can have, any bearing on faith or no faith. Here is the prerogative, to sit in judgment on the credentials of heaven's ambassador, and on the message which he brings. When there is no evidence, let it have no faith. When there is evidence, let it judge according to evidence, and every item of its faith, whether in the form of assent or dissent, is as truly rational and trustworthy as were its knowledge infinite.

But reason may be perverted. Yes, and that is our concern, and its consequences will be ours. Reason may be perverted; is reason then all our strength and all our reliance? Yes. But when I say this I mean REASON; not reason perverted. When I speak of and commend Christianity, I mean not a corrupted, false Christianity. When I speak of man, of his exaltation and dignity, of his noble powers, and the achievements of which he is capable, I mean not a corpse corrupted in its grave. Reason perverted is not reason, it is folly, madness. And because reason may be perverted, is it therefore not all our reliance and all our strength in the discovery of truth? Reason may be perverted, and therefore is not to be used! What then, in the name of reason, shall we use? Answer, in the name of reason, and not use your reason, if you can. Or answer with self-consistency, and say our folly, and you are welcome to the results. What nonsense to pretend to prove by reason that there is no reliance on reason!

2. It may be rational to believe in the divine origin of Christianity, on the supposition of a comparatively low degree of evidence of the fact. Those who reject Christianity have often insisted that a peculiarly high degree of evidence is requisite, to warrant faith in the divine origin of this system of religion. This claim is based on the principle, that a benevolent God in giving a religion to men, on the reception or rejection of which such tremendous consequences depend, would not fail to furnish such a degree of evidence as would infallibly secure human belief. To this I reply, that it either proceeds on the principle that faith can be compelled by evidence, to the entire exclusion of disbelief, or it does not. If it does, it rests on a false principle. The human mind can disbelieve, and has disbelieved, against the highest probable, and even against demonstrative evidence. Besides a compelled faith would be utterly inconsistent with moral responsibility on the part of man. What moral worth, what respect for God or confidence in his character would be involved in a faith which a man could not shun nor avoid. Nor is this all, it is in fact claiming that the whole system of Christianity shall be changed from a moral system to one of physical influence, and of course that it shall neither be right to receive nor wrong to reject it. The act of reception would be of physical necessity, not moral obedience. Is it then said, that

the evidence might be so increased as to secure faith without compulsion? I answer, that any supposable increase of evidence, instead of securing faith, might prove the greatest calamity, since for aught that appears, men might still reject that evidence and thus greatly augment the guilt of unbelief. Suppose then, that when Christianity was introduced into the world, it had been written in the heavens above us in letters of light and fire so that all the dwellers on earth would read it, "CHRISTIANITY IS A REVELATION FROM GOD," this would have compelled the faith of men to the exclusion of disbelief, or it would not. If it would, then it would have been inconsistent with a moral system, and faith itself had been no virtue. If it would not, then like any other miracle, as that of the rending rocks, the opening graves, the rising dead, the quaking earth and darkened sun, it might have only aggravated the guilt of every unbeliever. We are therefore utterly incompetent to decide what would be the dictate of benevolence in the case. The proper question for us then, is not what a benevolent God would do, but what it is rational for us to do, in view of what he has actually done. Or, to present the question which I now wish to examine, more precisely--is it rational on our part to believe in the divine origin of Christianity, on the supposition of a comparatively low degree of evidence of the fact?

The infidel then will not complain, if we impute to him the opinion, that the religion which he takes so much pains to destroy, is unfriendly, or at least unnecessary to human happiness. Nor, if he can make good this opinion, shall we have any controversy with him in respect to the reasonableness of his demand for a higher degree of evidence that this religion is from God. Such a religion would, in its very nature, furnish a strong presumption against its divine origin, and a very high degree of evidence be fairly required to counteract, if indeed any degree could counteract, such a presumption.

But if a religion demands our faith in its divine origin, and if to believe it divine, is obviously, and in every respect essential to our true and best interests, then the case is materially changed. It is a common mistake, that a man's interest ought to have no influence on his faith. There are cases in which it removes presumptive evidence to the contrary, and

even becomes evidence of truth. Were one of you to be told that your, father had disinherited you in his will, it would require more evidence to make you believe it, than if you were told that he had bequeathed to you your portion of his estate. True it undoubtedly is, that his interest should never lead him to believe without, or against evidence. But sound reason often dictate's faith, and faith that shall be practical, in view of what may be termed comparatively very slight, evidence. If in a particular case my interest will not be injured by believing if it may be greatly injured by not believing, and if it may be essentially promoted by believing, then to believe on the ground of slight evidence, so far as to control action, is the dictate of sound reason.

That this principle of faith is the dictate of sound reason and common sense, may be shown by its universal application in all the affairs of human life. A scheme for the accumulation of wealth occurs to the merchant, which can result in no possible loss, which may produce large acquisition, and which, neglected, may involve him in ruin. A sick man may soon die, unless some proposed remedy be used; the use of it can do no possible injury, but may restore him to health. Now what is the dictate of reason in respect to faith--that degree of faith which is necessary to action--however slight the evidence or probability, if it be real evidence, that a good result will be secured? Ought such evidence to be rejected or disregarded? Would that be sound reason? But in the case before us, we have interests at stake immeasurably more momentous. We are confessedly in the hands of an Almighty Being, and at his disposal forever. A system of religion, claiming to be from Him, is in our possession, and demands our faith in its divine origin, on the alternative of endless happiness or endless misery. To believe it to be divine, we will now suppose, can result in no real evil, but may result in immeasurable good; not to believe it to be divine may result in immeasurable evil. Who can rationally hesitate what to believe, be the balance of probability from other sources in support of the divine origin of this religion ever so small?

The case would be still stronger, if we were here to assume (what would be perfectly legitimate, in view of our former conclusions,) viz., that to yield to the practical influence of Christianity is indispensable to man's

highest happiness in this world. Nor would it be too much to assume, as a point conceded by the most respectable infidel authors, that the practical tendency of Christianity is to perfect man in character and in happiness. If then we suppose that a man may conform his character substantially to this system of religion, without believing it to be divine, still it is undeniable that such a faith would secure to it a far higher and more perfect influence. I may go farther still. If we suppose there is no evidence to the fact of the divine origin of this religion, except that which arises from its perfect adaptation to man's moral perfection and consequent happiness, it were the highest, noblest act of reason TO BELIEVE. And further still, on the supposition of this perfect adaptation to this high end, I say, if Christianity be a delusion, disturb not my faith in its divine origin. If falsehood is better than truth, then let us have falsehood. As a moral being, who has much to enjoy and to hope for in time, and who may live onward in the ages of eternity, I cannot dispense with the influence of such a faith, nor abandon its consolations and its prospects.

I might add did our limits allow, that on the supposition of a low degree of evidence for Christianity, while more proof might be useless and worse than useless, there may be great advantages in exactly that degree of evidence which God has furnished. Particularly, it may be one benignant part of that system of moral discipline by which our honesty and integrity of principle are to be tried and confirmed, by which men are to be made considerate, impartial, and attentive to every degree of evidence; to be kept from levity, and contempt, and ridicule, on a subject on which their eternal well-being, and that of a world, may depend.

If the principle of faith which I have now presented be rational, it shows the following things, viz.:

- (1.) The injustice of the demand for any peculiarly high degree of evidence in favor of Christianity as the only legitimate ground of faith.
- (2.) It shows the true cause of Infidelity in those who make this demand

for higher evidence, viz., that they do not regard Christianity as adapted to promote their true and best interests, and that they do not like it as a system of religion. It involves, in their view, a derangement of their plans, and a thwarting of their inclinations. I am not now saying whether they are right or wrong in this opinion, but simply that such must be their opinion. For when was it known that a man disbelieved against even the slightest balance of probability, while he fully regarded it for his interest, in every respect, to believe?

(3.) It shows what, in many cases, is the most promising method of convincing men of the divine origin of Christianity, viz., to show them its adaptation to man's present and future well-being. If such be the real nature of this religion, its reception or rejection must depend greatly on its being seen and understood to be what it really is. As long as the thing itself is not understood, its rejection, if not rational, is not strange, but easily accounted for. Why should a man receive a system of religion of which he knows nothing, merely because some one tells him it is from heaven? Nay more; why should he even examine the question of its divine origin? He sees nothing in its nature or its adaptations that give any importance to the question, whether it come from heaven or not; nothing of course, to render it worth a demonstration. And if with this ignorance of the thing itself, we suppose the conviction to be associated of its utter uselessness, and even of hostile tendency to good results, why should such a mind, with these views of the matter, care to know what the evidence of its divine origin is? By what asseverations of the divine origin of Mahomedanism could you induce the population of New England seriously to examine the question?

But now suppose a man to become well acquainted with the Bible, and to find that the book actually develops the most perfect system of means for the accomplishment of the most perfect conceivable end--a mighty scheme for a mighty purpose--a scheme and a purpose worthy of an infinite being, nothing less than a scheme or system of means to secure to a world of his intelligent and immortal creatures, perfection in character and perfection in happiness. Suppose him to see that the scheme is as simple as it is grand, as perfect in its adaptation as it is glorious in its end,

as indispensable as it is useful--that it is so in the very nature of things, that it is and must be so from the very constitution of the human mind, and that the belief of it as divine has as direct a tendency to secure the result in the absolute perfection of every human being, as the belief of danger to produce alarm, or the prospect of good, the desire and pursuit of it. I ask, would not such a man be very apt to say, "I shall examine the evidence of the divine origin of this book, here is something worthy of such an origin, every presumption that it is the imposture of empires, villains and enthusiasts is removed--it may be from God, it comports with his character, it is the very thing and the only thing to accomplish the design of Him who made man, it is that, and exactly that which a benignant Creator would do for his own creatures--my highest, best immortal interest may depend on the question--I must see and know whether God has done this thing or not." I am not now saying what the result of such an examination would be, but that without some just knowledge of what Christianity is, no man will examine the question of its divine origin, and with such knowledge, no man who has not become reckless of God, and of his own immortal nature and immortal interests will refuse to examine it. It may be from God, all it says of God may be true, all it says of the Saviour, of the miracles of his power and grace, of the scenes of immortality and retribution--all it says of those who believe not may be true. He who refuses with this tremendous peradventure in view, despises God, despises a soul, the next greatest thing to God, and that soul is his own.

(4.) It shows the reasonableness of faith in that great number of believers in Christianity, who do not and who cannot consistently with the other duties of life, become acquainted with but a small part of the evidence on the question. Of this class of men not one in a thousand has the leisure, or the talents, or the learning requisite to examine and weigh one-half of the evidence, especially what is called the external evidence. What qualification have the greater part of believers in Christianity to enter into the controversy with Hume or Voltaire? And have they therefore no reasonable faith? Have the common people no reason to believe the almanac because they are not astronomers--to believe that an eclipse will happen as foretold because they are incompetent to calculate an eclipse themselves? Rave the same class of men no reason to believe

that boats and locomotives are propelled by steam, because the philosopher has evidence that it must be so, which they have not? Plainly we may have sufficient evidence of truth without having all that which others possess. And in the present case, the author of the gospel may have intended that its great object and end and its perfect adaptation to that end, should be its chief evidence, especially to the great mass of mankind. Of this they may be perfectly competent judges. This, according to the laws of evidence, may be altogether sufficient to an honest, while more would be utterly insufficient to a dishonest mind, and while to neglect this, may be to neglect the very ground on which God has rested the proof, and required belief of by far the greater part of mankind. Accordingly, I hope to show that from the Bible alone, in the adaptation of its contents to man's perfection in character and happiness, a most conclusive argument may be derived that it is from God, one on the strength of which the unlettered peasant, ignorant, as he is of all history, and destitute as he is of all learning, shall be more rational in his belief than Hume, Voltaire and Gibbon in their unbelief with all their scholarship.

(5.) If the principle of faith before stated be rational, it will enable us to form a juster estimate of the amount of the actual evidence, and to see how abundant and overwhelming it must be to a well balanced mind. Nothing is more remote from the truth than the supposed confession by the advocates of Christianity, that it rests its claim on a low degree of evidence. So far from it, there is scarcely any single question on which in their view evidence may be so accumulated. Witness "the piles of authorship," not merely as made up of repetitions, but of divers arguments resting on independent grounds, and drawn from distinct sources. Let the works of Butler, of Lardner, of Paley, of Wilson, of Erskine, of Gregory, and many other modern authors, tell how in the estimation of the friends of Christianity, its proofs have been augmented in later times and down to the present hour. It is not then to be assumed, that the claim for the divine origin of Christianity rests on any thing like a low degree of evidence. It is a question to be tried, a question not to be disposed of in favor of such a claim, till some hundredth or thousandth part of the evidence shall be examined and overthrown by those who make it. If any considerable part of the evidence offered and relied on is substantial, then indeed it is abundant and overwhelming. Nay more;

there is evidence in every form, of every kind and degree which can be well imagined on the subject; evidence, in the language of another, fitted alike for "the high achievement of silencing Infidelity in the lofty and academic walks of life, as well as to carry Christianity into workshops and cottages." Christianity in the fullness of her strength, if one-half of what is claimed for her be true, has arguments for Jew and Gentile, for bond and free, for men of a false religion and men of no religion--arguments "by which she may confront the powers of literature, and compel the most arrogant of her disciples to do her homage, and those also by which her ministers from the pulpit may spread a well grounded faith amidst the multitude of the people."

I am not now saying that such evidence does in fact, but only that it is claimed to exist; and that on the true principle of rational faith, if only a considerable part of what is claimed, does exist and is substantial evidence, then it is abundant and even overwhelming, to an enlightened and well-balanced mind.

3. While it is essential to a fair argument on the question of a revelation from God, that the facts and principles which constitute the premises should be mutually understood and admitted by the parties, it is true that to a considerable extent they are not thus understood and admitted. These facts are very numerous, and while some of them are understood and admitted by the parties, others are not, and others only in some general respects, but not in those on which the conclusion depends. I need not say, that it is to no purpose that the parties reason in such a case for the conviction of one another. In my own view, the fact that there has been so much of this mode of argumentation, is a principal reason that this controversy has not long since been terminated, so far as its continuance has depended on any show of argument. I say not whose fault it is. But so much is undeniable, that the premises of the argument, if any thing is accomplished by reasoning, must be understood and admitted by the parties. What is not understood must be explained, and if denied must be proved or abandoned. To see the bearing of these remarks let us take a case.

Suppose you have received a letter from another, having the signature of your father, and the question should arise, whether it is actually written by him. Now to take the question ab initio; if you have no father, the debate is ended before it can be really begun. If you have a father, then there is room for the question whether the letter be from him. Again, if you have a father, and yet there is some absolute impossibility that he should be the author of the letter, or of any letter whatever, this precludes all further debate; while if the possibility of his writing a letter be admitted, then the question in this respect is open for discussion. Again, let it be supposed that he is one of the wisest and most affectionate of parents, and that the letter, in respect to its contents, is wholly and even contemptibly useless and unnecessary, as advising you to eat and drink and breathe, if you would live; or suppose that without any sufficient cause or reason, and under pretexts known to be entirely groundless, it consists of threatenings to injure you even to withdraw all support and kindness, and to cast you out as a disinherited exile; suppose that in one of these respects the contents of the letter are absolutely irreconcilable with the known character of the father, here again there is a strong presumption against the supposed authorship. Again, let it be supposed that the father is not only most judicious and affectionate, but a man of high literary and scientific acquisitions; that he is, above all things, intent to secure the scholarship of his son, and peculiarly competent to aid him in attaining the highest literary eminence, and that the letter is written in subservience to this object; that it contains counsels, directions, inducements, and information, which are peculiarly fitted, and even necessary, to secure the end on which his heart is set; in a word, it is just such a letter as such a father in such circumstances would write to such a son, and you perceive some of the strongest reasons for believing that he actually wrote it. Again, as we suppose certain other things to be true or not to be true--the handwriting, the style, the manner, &c., &c., to be or not to be those of the father; or the letter to contain or not to contain allusions, implications, coincidences, statements of facts, of a certain character--these things, as they may be supposed to be or not to be, would have an important bearing on the question. Again; let it be supposed that the letter declares, that for the purpose of placing the authenticity of the letter itself beyond all reasonable doubt, that the father has done what in the case would be deemed a very singular and extraordinary thing--something which neither he nor any other man ever did before--something indeed, which if done would settle the question,

but which, in your view of the case, it is absolutely incredible that he should do so incredible, that no evidence, especially no testimony, can, in your view, when simply placed and balanced against its inherent incredibility, be esteemed sufficient proof that he has done it, and yet that the authenticity of the letter is made to depend on the fact that he has done this very thing. Here again is something which bears against the alleged source of the letter. But now again, in view of the high importance and even necessity of your believing it to be from your father, in order to accomplish its object, let us imagine what was not before supposed, that your father is fully apprised of some cause, some peculiar structure of your mind, some propensity or mode of thinking, that will prevent you from believing the letter to come from him without the supposed extraordinary marks of its authenticity; and that he knows, and that you and others know, if the object of the letter is to be attained, this is altogether the best way to attain it. Now, in view of the father's ardent and supreme desire to accomplish the object, there arises a strong presumption that he will adopt the very method, which, under another view of the case, appeared so entirely incredible; for you now see a reason why he should do it, even one which renders it almost incredible that he should not.

Thus you see how, on the supposition of one kind of premises, the mind is led to one conclusion, and on the supposition of another kind, to the opposite conclusion, respecting the supposed origin of the letter. Just so it is in respect to the great question, whether God has given a revelation to man. The cases are entirely analogous. And the force of an argument for a divine revelation on each individual mind will depend on the views which that mind has of what God is, what his character is, what his relations to man are, what he has done, and what he has not done, what is and what is not his great end in man's creation, and what are his particular designs toward him; what he will do to accomplish his designs; what man is, what his character is, what his relations and his destiny are; and what the Bible is, what it is in its design, adaptation and tendency, and how it agrees or disagrees with the character of God and with his relations and designs toward man. It is only as we understand these things, that we are competent to make an argument on this subject, or to judge of one when it is made. It is only as the parties in this controversy

understand and are agreed in these great facts and principles respecting God, and man, and the Bible, that they are prepared to enter on the discussion with any prospect or hope of advantage. How could any man be a competent judge of the question concerning the supposed letter, who knew nothing of the character, the designs, the relations of the father, nothing of the son, and nothing of the contents of the letter? You see then, that unless the parties in the present discussion are agreed in the premises, the discussion must be fruitless.

Now I readily admit, that in many of the facts which constitute the premises they are agreed, but I maintain that, in many others they are not; and that so long as they are not, the argument for the divine origin of Christianity must prove ineffectual. I said they are agreed in some of the premises. They agree that there is a God of infinite natural perfection; that he is a being of a perfect moral character, or infinitely benevolent, disposed to secure the greatest amount of happiness which in the nature of things he can secure; they agree that he is the providential governor of the world, and, as the omniscient author of all things, his providential will must extend to all actual beings and events; they may also agree that he is the moral governor of men, in some very general and indefinite sense. But in respect to the particular nature of the government which God exercises over this world, and therefore in respect to the precise method, way, or means by which God aims to secure the happiness of his creatures, whether it involves necessarily in the nature of things, a perfect moral government of free moral agents by law, with a strict adherence to all the peculiar principles and influences of such a system as the best means of the best end; and if it does, whether such a system does or does not in its own nature involve the existence of evil, natural and moral, and whether it does or does not in its own nature preclude the final termination of all evil whether there is a future state, and whether we have any means of deciding what will be man's condition hereafter what hopes and what fears he would be authorized to entertain from the light of nature, whether man, without a revelation, would or could, on the basis of evidence, look forward with cheering anticipations to the future, or whether he would be compelled by the most decisive evidence only to forebode a fearful hour of retribution--on these, and many other main questions, the parties are not agreed. No one can have attentively read

the controversy on both sides of this great question, without seeing that one of the parties reasons on one set of premises and principles, and the other party on another.

Were we to see an artificer employed in constructing a machine, though we were ignorant of its nature and its design, still, if we knew that he was neither deficient in power, skill, materials, or disposition to finish it, but was fixed and immutable in his resolution to give it ultimately, and as rapidly as the case allows, its highest perfection, we should have no doubt that the machine, whatever it might be, would be finished, and the end proposed accomplished.

Again; if now we suppose the purpose or end aimed at to be ascertained, this at least, in many cases, would give us the means which he would adopt, or was adopting, to accomplish his end. If his object was to propel a boat through the water, we should expect him, in these days, to make a steam-engine. If his object was to see what is to be seen in the moon, we should expect him to make a telescope; or if it was to mark the divisions of time, we should expect him to make a watch or a clock.

Again, let us now suppose that the machine is so far advanced, that any competent judge can decide beyond all mistake, both what the machine is, and what is its object or end. Then also such a judge can decide with entire confidence in respect to many particular thing which will be done and which will not be done by the artificer, in order to complete the machine and accomplish his end. Let it now be supposed that you and I are spectators of the progress of the work, and this particular question to arise between us and to engage us in fierce debate, viz., whether the machine when finished will contain a main-spring or not? And let us further suppose, that although there is in fact no reason to doubt on the point, that by some strange obliquity or imbecility of mind on the part of one of his, we are not agreed as to what the machine is, and you insist that the man is making a telescope, and I insist that he is making a watch. Now to what purpose shall we discuss the question concerning the main-spring, unless we can settle the preliminary question, whether

the artificer is in fact making a watch or a telescope? And how can the debate be prolonged a moment with the least show of reason until this previous question is correctly decided?

Substantially like this, in my view, is the state of the controversy between the opposers and the advocates of a divine revelation. The former have such views of the character of God, of his object and end in the creation and government of this world, and especially of the means he has actually adopted to accomplish this end, that they can no more see a reason why God should give a revelation to men, and such a revelation as the Bible is supposed to contain, than why a skillful artificer should insert a main-spring or a pendulum in a telescope. Hence their constant asseveration--it is utterly impossible, or if obliged to qualify a little by being reminded of God's omnipotence, and of the manifestation of his direct agency in creation, still they affirm that considering the character and designs of God, and the object and nature of Christianity, it is irrational, even utterly incredible, that it should be the subject of a direct interposition from heaven.

The advocates of Christianity however from their premises come to the directly opposite conclusion. With their views of the character of God, of his great object and end in the creation and government of this world of intelligent beings, and especially of the means or system which he has adopted for the accomplishment of this end, there is the same reason to conclude that God would give a revelation to the world, and the very revelation claimed, which there is for concluding that the supposed artificer in making a watch, would insert a mainspring to complete the instrument. Why should not God as well as man give completeness to the means of an end?

But here we come to another vital question, viz., is man competent to say what God will do and what he will not do? Is not the subject altogether too high for us? When we think what God is, of the eternity of his government, and of our distance from all direct and personal observation of him and the depth of his counsels, are not the form and mode of the

management of his empire, wholly inaccessible to all our faculties? I answer, if this indeed be so, then let us cease all inquiry, for to what purpose is it to inquire or reason or form opinions where nothing can be known? If it is all darkness here, then it is as dark to the infidel as to the Christian, and if the Christian cannot say what God will do, the infidel cannot say what he will not do. We may be right or we may be wrong in our conclusions, and that is all that can be said of the matter. But is it credible that a benevolent God has doomed his dependent creatures--creatures who know that their all depends on what God will or will not do, to the darkness and agony of utter uncertainty. Can it be that the almighty and supreme disposer of all destiny has given us no intimation of his designs? True indeed it is, that man is incompetent to say in many respects what God will or will not do; but in other respects, and we may safely say in all which are important to man's well-being, man is competent to say what God will and what God will not do.

The great point here undoubtedly is to distinguish what we can know or prove, from that which we cannot know or prove. And what I maintain is, that we can do this to such an extent as to furnish the sure premises of irrefragable argumentation on the most momentous of all questions to man, viz., what must be his destiny and on what it depends? Nor should it be forgotten, that the argument must of course be confined exclusively to what we do know or can prove; and that we are to place no reliance on what we do not know, ignorance being alike incompetent to make either an objection or an argument. The premises being conceded, all they involve and give, must be conceded also. If there is a benevolent God, then man can say, if such a God does any thing, what he does will be better than to do nothing. If he proposes an end, it will be the best end which he can accomplish. If he adopts the means of accomplishing an end, the means will be the best which he can adopt. If man can know what the best end is, as he most assuredly can, viz., the highest well-being of all, and if man can also ascertain what are the necessary and best means of accomplishing this end, then he can say that God will propose this end and adopt these means. If man can ascertain that a perfect God has actually adopted a given system of means for a given end, then can he say that system is the best. If man can know that any practicable thing is either essentially or circumstantially necessary to the

perfection of this system of means, then also he can say God will do that. Thus knowledge gives knowledge, if we know one thing we know another--if we know what a triangle is, we may know its angles to be equal to two right angles--if we know that whiteness exists, we know also that there is something white. On the contrary, if that knowledge is wanting which is necessary to further knowledge, then of course such further knowledge will not exist. If I know that one has made a watch, then I know what a watch is; and knowing what a watch is, I know it has a main-spring--if it answers the purpose for which it is made, I know it must be wound up, and if I also know either that no one could, or that no one would do this but the maker, and know that it has been done, then I know that he has done it. But if I do not know any one of these things on which my knowledge of another thing depends, then I do not know the latter. In the same manner is our knowledge of God and, of his doings more or less extended or limited. If we know or can prove certain things concerning God, then we can know and prove certain other things, and are as truly competent to say in such cases what God will do and what he will not do, as we are in like cases to say what a man will do, and what he will not do.

Nor can I dismiss the topic here. To maintain the doctrine of this necessary ignorance of God on the part of man, is not only to provide a refuge from the power of truth, it is to subvert all reasoning respecting God and the relations subsisting between God and his creatures. Whether there be a God or not, whether he be omnipotent, wise and good or not, are things of no importance for man to know, and for this decisive reason, such knowledge gives no results. On this principle God might as well be without power, without intellect, without goodness--the idolater's god--a thing "which the smith fashioneth with tongs and with hammers," or such as the prophet supposed who "peradventure sleepeth or is on a journey," as a being of infinite perfection. If we cannot say what God will and will not do, then there would be as much ground for love, for confidence, for hope, for joy in one sort of deity as another, and to see omnipotent malignity or even blind chance on the throne of the universe, would be as sufficient a basis for exultation and joy, as to behold a perfect God reigning there; for whatever perfection be ascribed to him, there is no telling what he will do and what he will not do.

On the other hand, if we know that it were better or more desirable that there should be one sort of deity than another, and better simply and solely because by knowing what he is, we can know to some extent what he will do and what he will not do, then we also know that the doing of some things is better than the doing of some other things. And knowing these things we know yet more. We know that a perfect God seeing the end from the beginning, and being immutable in his purposes, will accomplish his plans, and carry them on and out with all possible perfection to their results. And when the plan or system of things is actually adopted and developed to our inspection in its essential characteristics, we can tell what it is and what it is not. We can decide whether it is a system of mere physical agents, whether God reigns merely over material forms and animal life and sensation, and is the spectator only of the laws of matter and the acts of instinct, or whether he has adopted a moral system, and reigns over it according to the principles and laws of such a jurisdiction.

The argument for a divine revelation materially depends on the fact that God is administering a perfect moral government over man.

The proposition to be proved from this source is, THAT THE SYSTEM OF RELIGION CONTAINED IN THE BIBLE IS FROM GOD.

The argument divides itself into the following propositions:

- I. God administers a perfect moral government over men.
- II. By the administration of this government, God proposes or decrees to reform and bless a great multitude of our race.
- III. The importance and necessity of a revelation to the accomplishment of this end, create a strong probability or a moral certainty that God would give a revelation to men.

IV. That which is claimed to be a revelation from God, and which is contained in the Bible, is what it claims to be.

The first two of these propositions have been sufficiently discussed in preceding lectures. We need only consider the two which remain.

LECTURE XIV: The Importance of revelation renders it probable, if not certain, that God would give a revelation.

DIRECT ARGUMENT continued. -- Two remaining propositions considered. -- Prop. 3. The Importance of revelation renders it probable, if not certain, that God would give a revelation. -- Opposed by some. -- Their views discussed. -- Man not competent to decide on the manner, &c., of revelation. Recapitulation of argument on necessity of revelation. - Prop. I. That which claims to be a revelation is what it claims to be. -- Conclusion.

Our third leading position is the following, viz.: The importance and necessity of a revelation to the accomplishment of the great end of God in the creation and government of this world, furnish a strong probability, not to say a moral certainty, that God would give a revelation to men.

In the present lecture I propose to establish this position, and also briefly the fourth, viz.:

IV. That which is claimed to be a revelation from God, and which is contained in the Bible, is what it claims to be.

I proceed then to establish the third leading position, viz.:

III. The importance and necessity of a revelation to the accomplishment of the end of God in the creation and government of this world furnish a strong probability, not to say a moral certainty, that God would give a revelation to men.

This position has to encounter a strong prejudice, which I have already had occasion to notice in another connection. Among the advocates of revelation, there are those who would rely wholly on what is called the external evidence of Christianity. They tell us "that we are utterly unable to say what God will do, and what he will not do; that the subject is altogether too high for us; that we have had experience of what man will do in given circumstances, but we have had no experience of what God will do in given circumstances; and that to pretend to determine what God will do, or what he will not do, in any given circumstances, is an act of glaring rebellion against the authority of the Baconian philosophy." That none of those defenders of Christianity, who have relied on the internal evidence, have violated the true principles of reasoning, I am not concerned to show. Be this as it may, the above opinion, in the broad and unqualified form of statement in which it is presented, is utterly incredible, as well as destitute of the least claim to the true mode of philosophizing. For to what purpose is it to inquire, or reason, or form opinions at all concerning the acts and the doings of God, if nothing can be known or concluded on the subject? What matter is it who or what God is, if from our knowledge of what He is, we can in no respect infer what he will do and what he will not do? Why is it that these men, who so zealously contend for an exclusive reliance on the external evidence of Christianity, are so suspicious of all attempts to decide what God will do and will not do? Do they themselves not believe that a perfect God, if he professes to give a revelation to man, will speak truth in that revelation? Do they not believe that a perfect God will not work miracles in attestation of falsehood? And is not this inferring and believing what God will do and will not do, in given circumstances? At least in two respects then, let them qualify their broad and sweeping position.

Besides, are these two the only respects in which we are competent to say what God will do and what he will not do? If there are no other acts or

doings which we can surely and safely affirm that a perfect God will perform, how can we ever prove that there is a perfect God? And if we cannot prove this by his acts and his doings, and this on the principle that a perfect God will do some things and will not do other things. then how can we know that he is a perfect God, or, if he gives a professed revelation, that he will speak truth; or if he works miracles, that he does not work them in attestation of falsehood? The plain matter of fact is, that there are two modes of reasoning in respect to intelligent voluntary beings, which are alike founded in experience, and accord with the Baconian philosophy. Thus, in certain cases, experience fully authorizes us to reason from the acts of voluntary beings to their character, their principles, their designs, and to determine what these are. In other cases, having ascertained the latter from their acts and doings in some respects, experience fully authorizes us to reason from these to their acts and their doings in other respects, and to determine what these will be and will not be.

If I know that an artificer has begun to make a watch, with adequate power and skill to finish and give it the highest perfection, and if I know him to possess an unfaltering firmness of purpose, I may infer that he will perfect what he has begun, as particularly that he will insert a mainspring in the watch. And further, if I know that he is fully resolved to secure in the most perfect degree possible to him the true use of the watch; and if I know that he is making, or has actually made it for the use of another, who will never understand its true use unless the maker instructs him, then I may infer that he will give this instruction; and if the requisite instruction respecting the true use of the watch should be liable to, or should be foreseen to be actually connected with some incidental evil, still it is quite supposable, that the maker should evince, in the most decisive manner, an inflexible purpose to give not only the highest perfection. to the watch, but to every thing which can be regarded as the means of its perfection; so that if the end fails in any degree to be accomplished, it shall be seen that the failure is in no respect truly and properly attributable to any thing which he has done or failed to do. That such premises give such conclusions respecting man is obvious; they can do no less in respect to God, when it is remembered that he is a Being absolutely and immutably perfect.

If then we can know or prove certain things concerning God, then we can know and prove certain other things concerning him, and are, in view of the immutability of his purposes, more competent to say what God will do and what he will not do in given circumstances, than we are to decide the same things in respect to man. If we can know or prove what the best end of creation is, as we most assuredly can--viz., the highest well-being of all--and if we can also ascertain what are the necessary and best means of accomplishing this end, then we can say that a perfect God will propose this end and adopt these means of accomplishing it. And further, if we can know or prove that any practicable thing is either essentially or circumstantially necessary to the perfection of this system of means, or to secure the end in the most perfect degree possible to him, then we can infer, that notwithstanding any incidental evils, he will give perfection to this system of means. It is not true, then--it is indeed utterly incredible, that a benevolent God has doomed his moral creation, even under the light of nature, to the darkness and agony of utter uncertainty in respect to what he will do and what he will not do. The supposition, as it would be easy to show, subverts all natural and all revealed theology.

But here let me not be misunderstood. I am not saying, if we were to assume simply that God is benevolent, that we could, with no knowledge of his doings, make the same sure inferences which we can now make. I readily concede also, that man in his actual condition is wholly incompetent to say, in many respects, or in respect to many things, what God will do and what he will not do. The great point is to distinguish what man, in his actual condition, can know or prove, from what he cannot know or prove, respecting the doings of God. The presumption that fearlessly ventures to dogmatize its decisions in the dark, and the timidity that rejects truth in the broad daylight of evidence, are alike reprehensible.

To come then to the particular inquiry before us, can we distinguish what cannot be known or proved from what can be known or proved in respect to God's giving a revelation to this world? What I maintain is, that we can do this to such an extent as to decide with entire confidence that God

would give a revelation to man; and from this fact, and in view of the nature, the adaptations and actual results of that system of religion which is contained in the Scriptures, we must conclude that Christianity is a revelation from God.

To prevent misapprehension then, and the confounding of one thing with another, I would here explicitly concede that we may be wholly incompetent to say in what manner God would give a revelation to man, or at what time, or to what extent. In these respects we may be unable through the want of all requisite premises to form any conclusion. More particularly in regard to the time when God would do this, I would say, that under the mere light of nature, we might be ignorant whether the revelation would be made in this or a future state. Human reason might be utterly incompetent to judge whether man's probation would not continue after death, and whether further discoveries of religious and moral truth would not be deferred to some indefinite period of man's future existence. In regard to the manner, we may be incompetent to determine whether it will be orally or by writing, by the ministry of men or of some superior agents, or even by a direct communication from himself. In regard to the extent, we may be unable to say, whether he will give it to all men of all ages and nations, or only to a part of the race. Still we can say that he will give it to such an extent, as shall be sufficient to prevent the utter defeat and frustration of his design in adopting the system. If he does not give a revelation to some extent, this design will wholly fail. We must conclude therefore that he will give a revelation to some extent, and to that degree which will best subserve his benevolent end, though we cannot determine what that extent is. In maintaining therefore that there is proof from the light of nature, that God would give to men a revelation, I affirm nothing in respect to the time, the manner, or the extent of such a revelation beyond what has now been stated. On these topics I do not pretend that we have the requisite premises for any conclusion. It is obvious however, that we may still have abundant proof of the fact, that God would give a revelation. We may have sufficient premises for one conclusion, though we have none for another. To recur to the example, we may have decisive proof that a watch-maker will complete the watch he has begun, and that he will give the requisite instructions concerning its true object, to him for whose use he makes it, and yet we may

possess no means of deciding when, in what manner, and to what extent he will do the latter. While in respect to these particular points of inquiry, all may be left indeterminate and uncertain; still the fact that he has begun to make the watch, that he has proceeded so far in the work, surmounting all obstacles, and showing in every conceivable way that he is fully intent on the accomplishment of his design, that nothing can come into competition with it, nor hinder him from doing all that is necessary to give entire perfection to every thing fitted to secure the end aimed at; the fact ascertained by the most abundant and decisive experience, that he for whose use he makes the watch, will never so understand it as to secure the end without instructions from the maker--these things being known, render the conclusion unavoidable, that the requisite instructions concerning the use of the watch will be given. We have all the reasons for this conclusion which are or can be well conceived of, in respect to the acts and doings of voluntary beings in any case whatever. There is according to the supposition, no possible ground of doubt in respect to the ultimate end of the watch-maker, nor in respect to his purpose to give the highest possible perfection to the means of accomplishing it, nor the necessity of instructions in the use of the watch to the perfection of these means. Who then can doubt in regard to the fact that such information will be given?

Such is the argument by which we prove from the light of nature that God would give a revelation to men. To present the argument, we now recur to what we have attempted to prove in the preceding course of lectures.

We have seen that man from the nature of his constitution and the condition in which he is placed, is a moral being--that conformity to the law of benevolent action is the true and only means of his perfection in character and in happiness. We have seen that God, his Maker, administers a perfect moral government over this world, through an economy of grace; that in this system he aims at the great, the best conceivable end by the best conceivable means, or that this system of means is in every conceivable respect perfectly adapted to the best conceivable end--that God has proposed the highest happiness of his moral creation which he can secure as the end of his government; that he

gives to the system of government which is the means of this end every conceivable perfection--that to this end and the perfection of this system of means every thing else in his whole course of providence all that can be called good, is subservient, and every thing that is evil, if it can be made to contribute to this end, is used for this purpose--that every evil which to him is incidental to the system and unavoidable in the nature of things, if the system be adopted, is incurred, or to speak in the language of theology, is purposed or decreed rather than not adopt and carry out the system. We have seen, that in administering his moral government under a gracious economy, God manifests himself as a just God and yet a Saviour--that in this way he evinces the fact, of an atonement, though not the matter and method of it, thus manifesting the immutability of his purpose, not only to accomplish the end of the system adopted, but to give the system itself the highest perfection in respect to fitness and adaptation to its end, so that instead of spreading the gloom of despair over this world of sin and guilt, he authorizes the belief of a future state, in which the order, beauty and splendor of his moral administration will be completed in the blessedness of the righteous, and in the merited punishment of the incorrigibly, wicked--results, which in the comparative amount of happiness and misery, will fully accord with the benignity and grace manifest in the system of means adopted for their accomplishment.

Such then is the great, the comprehensive design of God in the creation and government of this world, as presented to us by the light of nature. Reason duly employed on the subject gives us the whole and every part of it. It gives us not only the end, viz., the highest perfection of his moral creation, in character and in happiness, possible to the Creator, but also the perfection of the system of means, both in every essential respect as a system of moral government under grace, and in every circumstantial respect as involving all that can be conceived to be necessary to prevent the failure of the end, and to secure its most perfect accomplishment.

I now ask, what will become of this great Plan of God the Creator? Will his design in creating men moral beings--beings the most exalted in kind which he can create, be abandoned through indifference or fickleness? Will the great object of all his works--that to which every thing beside is

subordinate and subservient--be relinquished as impracticable by an Omniscient and Almighty Creator? Will it prove in the issue to be a design, for entering upon which, he who sees the end from the beginning, will see that there were no reasons, or for abandoning which he will discover new reasons? Will that design of God, in forming beings in his own image, which stands forth first, brightest, greatest of them all, terminate in utter failure and defeat? Will the progress of this plan of God come to a sudden end--the moral constitution of his creatures, this whole moral system, be divested of all significance, and its author of all his wisdom and honor, and all that can deter from iniquity and secure the moral perfection of moral beings; all that can bless man, exalt God; all that can make heaven rejoice and hell tremble, be frittered away into an insignificant and degrading mockery? If the immutability of God, the infinite perfections of his Godhead--if the clear manifestation of designs worthy of himself--if their superior excellence as stamping all others with insignificance, and if their ceaseless development and unfaltering progress for six thousand years, give any security in respect to what God will do, their must we look for a full and perfect consummation of God's great design as the moral governor of men.

I now advert to another position, which I persuade myself has been fully established in preceding lectures, viz., the necessity of a revelation from God.

I attempted to show that there is a necessity of such revelation, in three respects:

First. To give the highest conceivable perfection to the mode of discovering truth to the human mind.

Secondly. To any extensive and useful discovery of truth to the mind.

Thirdly. To the discovery of some important truths, which the human mind

could not discover without a revelation.

The question now is, whether, in view of this necessity of a revelation as existing in these respects, we have reason to conclude that God would give a revelation to man. I proceed then to show-

First, that the necessity of a revelation to give the highest conceivable perfection to the mode of discovering truth to the human mind, supposing it to be necessary for no other purpose, furnishes decisive proof that God would give a revelation to men. The argument here rests on two facts which have already been established, viz., that a revelation is necessary to the highest conceivable perfection in the mode of discovering truth to the human mind; and that God has actually evinced his design to give perfection to that system which he has adopted to reclaim and save this lost world. That a revelation is necessary to the highest perfection of a reclaiming system, so far as perfection in adaptation, fitness, and tendency to secure the end of such a system is concerned, no one will deny. Nor can I imagine any possible ground for doubt on the question, whether God, for this reason, would give a revelation to men, except one, viz.: the possibility that through perversion on their part, it might prove for the worse instead of for the better--become a curse instead of a blessing. To this I answer, that admitting this possibility, it furnishes no proof that it would in fact prove to be for the worse, nor that God would not give a revelation. I answer again, that the whole history of his providence, as I have abundantly shown, evinces a fixed purpose to give perfection to his system of moral government under a gracious economy, or to his system of reclaiming influence irrespectively of its foreseen perversion on the part of his subjects. This foreseen fact of perversion in its (almost) absolute universality, has not prevented him from giving to the system every essential perfection, nor from giving it every circumstantial perfection, to such an extent as to remove all presumption against the fact; while what he has done furnishes the highest probability of the fact that he will, sooner or later, add that of a revelation. Without supposing that God designs actually to reclaim and save one of the human race, I maintain that one design of God is too conspicuous in his providence toward this world to be denied or doubted, viz., his design to give

absolute perfection to his system of reclaiming influences. The fact that he has done so much for this purpose already, in an economy of grace, bringing every conceivable influence in the universe to bear on this great object, and doing every conceivable thing to accomplish it except that of giving a revelation, is as truly decisive of his design to give perfection to this system as had he done more. Whatever may be supposed to be the reason for giving such perfection to this system as he has actually given--whether he proposes to reclaim some of our guilty race or not, or whether we can or cannot assign any reason for this perfection of the reclaiming system, or whether we can or cannot say why he has not already added a revelation, supposing that he has not, one thing is decisively proved, viz., that he chooses to give it the highest conceivable perfection. Take the case of the watch-maker. Suppose the work has progressed to a certain point--that he has done every thing, but one which is necessary for accomplishing the end proposed; he has finished a perfect watch, he has put the parts together, has inserted the main-spring, oiled the machinery, wound it up, placed it in the hands of a son for whose use he made it; he has done all this at no ordinary expense of time and labor, and with no ordinary degree of self-sacrifice; in a word, he has thus done all that can be conceived to be adapted and fitted to secure the end, except he has not told the possessor of the watch how to wind it up. And now, with all these proofs of his real design, do you, can you believe that he will never explain that to him? Suppose you cannot tell the results of giving this instruction--whether it will prove for better or for worse; suppose you can give no reason for delaying to give it for a few minutes or a few hours, can you therefore believe that the requisite instruction by the watch-maker on this material point will never be given? This, with any fair-minded man, could not be a matter of hesitation or doubt. So in respect to the reclaiming system of God. In view of what he has actually done toward giving it perfection as a system of adaptations and fitnesses, there is decisive reason for believing that he will give it absolute perfection; and in view of the necessity of a revelation to this, there is all the reason for believing that he would give a revelation, which there is for believing that he would perfect the system. And there is all the reason to believe that he will perfect the system, which the actual perfection of it in all respects but one can furnish. Having done all things necessary to its perfection but one, is there not a moral certainty that he will do that also? Having done so much, he has furnished so far as this kind of evidence is concerned, all that is possible in the case, more being impossible without

giving a revelation. If too we reflect on what God actually does to give perfection to this system, how the object stands forth the first and the highest, and as it were the whole and sole object of nature, of providence, and of grace; how all things are subordinated to this; how all influences from himself, his character, his relations, his friendship and favor, his displeasure and his wrath--every influence from man himself, every influence from earth and heaven, from time and eternity, is brought to subserve this design, who can doubt that, sooner or later, the Being with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, will give to such a system perfection absolute? The probability is the highest of which the nature of the case admits. If the acts and doings of God can prove any thing, they show that he would give a revelation to men.

It is easy to account for what he has done, on the supposition that he intends to do more; but it is not possible to account for what he has done, unless you suppose that he intends to do more.

God, by perfecting the system, would give higher proof that he preferred holiness to sin, than he would or could give. There is no reason for concluding that he will not perfect the system; there is therefore all the reason for concluding that he will perfect it, that the above consideration affords.

I proceed to show-

Secondly. That the necessity of a divine revelation to secure to any extent any useful practical knowledge of religious and moral truth to man, in connection with other facts, furnishes further proof that God would give a revelation to man. Let us look at the facts as already established. God, as we have seen, has, as the Creator and Governor of this world, proposed the best conceivable end, and has also adopted the best system of means for its accomplishment, with the single exception that it does not include a revelation. This great end is the highest happiness of

his creation; the system of means is a perfect moral government under an economy of grace. This end will fail, and this system of means will be in vain, and worse than in vain, without a revelation. If facts--if the experience of a world for thousands of years can prove any thing, it has proved, that without a revelation from God, all the generations of men will live and die in sin. At the same time, the nature, the immutable principles of God's perfect moral government, give another and still more appalling result--the complete and eternal misery of all these creatures of God. The great, the awful experiment has been made in respect to what man as a subject of God's moral dominion, will do without a revelation. It has proved that he will sin, and only sin. The throne of God, though a throne of grace, stands on the pillars of eternal justice, proffering no pardon, giving no hope to impenitent transgressors, but frowning in terrific majesty, and dooming a world of such transgressors to just and fearful retribution. The alternative is, either the failure of God's great end in creation, even the moral perfection and consequent perfect happiness, of every moral being, involving, as it must, the utter and endless misery of all, or the gift of a revelation from God to this lost world.

I maintain the high probability of the latter. To estimate this aright, we must recur to all those providential dealings of God to restore man to virtue and to happiness, which so clearly and so impressively disclose his design as a moral governor. If it be said, all this may be without a providential purpose actually to restore any; I admit the bare possibility of it, but this is not evidence, it is only probability. How then is this probability to be estimated? Is there even the slightest presumption that God would give existence to such a world, to such myriads of immortal beings, with the foresight, and therefore with the providential purpose that each and all should be miserable forever? Every presumption is against it. The merest surmise of such a fact without evidence, is unauthorized and injurious, and proscribed by every principle of just reasoning. The entire want of evidence of such a fact, in view of his perfect benevolence, is proof against it. Indeed as we have already shown, there is the most satisfactory proof, that the Creator will secure such results in the holiness and happiness of this part of his moral creation, as will furnish bright displays of his infinite goodness. Nay more. We have seen in that economy of grace and mercy which he has clearly disclosed in all the

ways of his providence, the sure pledge of results, in the holiness and happiness of men corresponding with its benignity and grace. Who are the objects of all this grace? The creatures of his power, the children of his love! Will God then adopt such a system of means to reclaim and save, giving it every conceivable adaptation and tendency to such an end--will he bring all creation and providence to attest his sincerity, and his overflowing kindness toward his disobedient children, without a design actually to reclaim and save, and with the knowledge and the purpose that the only result shall be the aggravation of the guilt and the ruin of all? Reflect and see what benignity and grace assail a thoughtless, wicked world at every step of life! What solicitude and earnestness to reclaim his wayward children, which none but a perfect God could feel or manifest! What riches of long-suffering and forbearance--(what evil that is not the infliction of paternal love)--what goodness leading to repentance and drawing with the cords of love and with the hands of a man--what yearnings of compassion, what bowels of mercy--what a length, breadth, height, depth in God's restoring love! And do such love and mercy thus seek their objects with the foresight that it will, and the purpose that it shall augment the guilt and ruin of them all? Is such the errand on which this mercy of God comes to this ruined world? Oh no. It is the breaking, the bursting forth of the heart of infinite love in acts of sincerest mercy actually to reclaim and save all that can be saved! It is the mercy of God, doing for each, and for all, and at every moment, all that can be wisely done. It is the decree of God unchangeable, actually to reclaim and save a multitude which no man can number, out from all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues a decree of God unchangeable, to bring home to himself bright hosts of holy, happy immortals, to satisfy, and bless, and rejoice that heart which sought their salvation! But without a revelation all will be lost--this design of mercy will fail! Surely that mercy will not withhold from the guilty beings it decrees to save, the revelation they need. No act of paternal kindness, no gift of a father's love is so sure, as that of revelation from its God to this lost world.

Once more --

Thirdly: The necessity of a revelation to the discovery of some important truths which man could not discover without it, proves that God would

give a revelation. I have already taken occasion to show how utterly hopeless would have been the condition of this sinful world, without the discovery which the Scriptures make to us concerning the manner in which its redemption is achieved--in other words the revelation of the triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in their respective relations to the work of man's redemption from sin. The two great problems are, how shall the perverseness of rebels be subdued to love; and if subdued, how can a just God receive them to favor? Here all is mystery unsolvable, darkness impenetrable and appalling! How could human reason alone and unaided have discovered the mystery of redemption? Even when God has revealed it, reason is lost in this abyss of love and mercy, and needs all its submission to believe! Man, sinful as he is, I admit, might repent and might hope for mercy from his Maker. But would he? What bondage so strong as bondage to sin--what death so hopeless as death in sin? Who shall deliver? What power shall give life, and health, and beauty immortal to these victims of sin and death? I said man might hope for mercy. But with a just apprehension of God's fearful justice and his own desert of its fearful doom looking upon a sin-avenging God as he must, and asking how can such a God show the same abhorrence of sin and yet forgive, as he would by turning a rebellious world into hell, then it is that the terrors of God come over us; hope trembles and expires. Not that it must be so, but it always has been and always will be, with exceptions that need not be mentioned. It is not hope in a God all tenderness which we need. It is that which looks upon a just God, and with a sense of his righteous indignation toward sin, reposes calmly and sweetly in his mercy. But there is so much terror here, so much darkness and tempest around the throne of God, that in the eye of guilt, the rays of mercy fade and will not suffice. Guilt will look up with confidence, only when it sees the throne of God upheld by "the man that is his fellow." Take away "the incarnate mystery," extinguish the light that reveals the great atonement of Christianity, and where is hope for human guilt? Zeno, Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, Epicurus, Porch, Academy, Lyceum, Infidelity, Deism, Philosophy, Human Reason, all, what can ye do, what can ye substitute for the blood of the Son of God? Extinguish that light which reveals the mercy of God through his Son, and let in the terrors of guilt and of God on this sinful world, and how would each and all, in the gloom or frenzy of despair, take their way down to everlasting burnings? Will a redeeming God then withhold that light from the world he would redeem? Will he abandon every purpose of mercy render every

other manifestation of it vain, and worse than in vain; will he give up his lost creature to the perdition of hell, when he has, for the light of nature teaches it, actually made an atonement? Will he do this by concealing from their view what that atonement is? Has he made, and given abundant, proof that he has made the only atonement, by the knowledge of which conscious guilt will ever be emboldened to approach a spotless God--the only atonement, the knowledge of which will ever give hope and peace and heaven to a guilty world; and will he refuse to give the knowledge of this atonement? Has he done all this in fact for us, and will he, by refusing to tell what it is, leave us only to a certain, fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation! It is incredible. I say not at what time in this world's history, nor whether in this or a future state; but that, sooner or later, the God of grace--that God who tells us in all his works and ways that he has in purpose or in fact, made an adequate atonement for human guilt, will also reveal its nature and its power. Having done the greater, he will also do the less. No act of an immutable God, no gift of his mercy, can be more certain than that of a revelation, declaring to the faith, the wonder, the gratitude, the joy of redeemed men, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,"

I have thus attempted to establish my third leading position:

III. That the importance and necessity of a revelation to the great end of God in the creation and government of the world, give a strong probability, not to say a moral certainty, that he would give a revelation to men.

The next and last position now claims consideration, viz.:

IV. That which is claimed to be a revelation from God, and which is contained in the Bible, is what it claims to be.

The argument is this: God will give a revelation to this world. We take the Bible, and if we had heard nothing of it before, we read, examine, understand it; we see that it is exactly such a book as we have decisive reasons to believe God would give to man, harmonizing with all our just views of the character, the relations, the government of God; adapted wonderfully and perfectly to the wants, the character, the condition and prospects of man; fitted to secure the high end of his creation, even his perfection in character and in blessedness. Its actual effects confirm and illustrate its perfection as the means of this great end. The writers of the book assert its divine origin. It had not a human origin, for we have proved the necessity of just such a book from God, and that man would never make such a book. Now I ask, whence came this book? What is its origin? Is it from God, or is it not?

SECTION III: THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD AS REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES

LECTURE I: THE FACT AND THE PROOF.

The nature of Man. -- Man, from the first, placed under Moral Government. -- This relation of God formally claimed throughout the Scriptures. -- The history of God's Providence -- The Theocracy of Israel. -- The leading Doctrines of the Scriptures.

To present God to men as their perfect Moral Governor, and to unfold the nature, the mode, and the issues of his moral administration under its different forms, is obviously the great design of Revelation, and that to which every other is subordinate and subservient. The manifestation of God in this august relation to man, carrying with it the relation of man to God as the subject of his moral government, and implying its foundation and its origin in the character of God, and in the nature and condition of man -- man's duty, character, and destiny, the influences under which he must act, the progress and results of the system -- may be justly said to be the comprehensive theme of Revealed Theology.

In attempting to unfold a subject so comprehensive, it is often necessary to discuss singly some of its prominent and essential parts. Especially must this be true when every such part of the whole subject has been one of long, extensive, and continued controversy. The part which has called forth the discussion and the controversy may be more or less comprehensive; it has usually been so in theology, as different circumstances and occasions have given rise to these partial and insulated discussions. Witness for example, without going further back in dogmatic history -- the Augustinian and Pelagian, the Calvinistic and

Arminian controversies, and also those far more restricted and limited themes and topics which have employed the labors of such men as Butler, Howe, Edwards, and many others. Such have been the forms in which the ablest and most distinguished theologians have professedly given to the world the theology of the Scriptures, the substantial truths of God's Revelation. In this way we have had, with more or less of Natural Theology, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Bodies of Divinity, Systems of Theology, Confessions of Faith, Creeds, and Catechisms. It is not my design to raise the question concerning the utility of what may be called Systematic Theology, but to say that all the attempts made by theologians to systematize the great and substantial truths of both Natural and Revealed Theology, have hitherto proved utter and complete failures, by a necessity arising from the manner in which they have been made. For, in all these attempts, there never has been any full and thorough exhibition, nor even a professed attempt at an exhibition, of that great and comprehensive relation of God to men, to which all things besides in creation and providence are subordinate and subservient; his relation to men as administering a perfect moral government over them as moral and, immortal beings created in his own image, I do not say, that on some parts of this commanding relation of God to men, nothing has been said nor even much which is true, with however, much more that is false, or if true, not decisively proved. But I say, in all the theology of uninspired men, there has been to this hour not even an attempt formally and fully to unfold the comprehensive relation of God to men as their perfect moral governor, in the nature, the essential principles, and actual administration of this government.

But if God actually sustains this comprehensive relation to men; if he is actually administering a system of perfect moral government over men; if all his works of creation and providence are subordinate and subservient to this high and comprehensive relation, then all theological truth must be comprised either in the truths which are essentially involved in this system of moral government, or must be in entire and perfect harmony with them.

It is not then my immediate design to call your attention to a full view of

God's moral government as exhibited in the Scriptures. My present design in this series of lectures is,

- I. To establish from the Scriptures the general FACT of God's moral government over men; and,
- II. To unfold the nature of this government as presented in the Scriptures. I proceed then on the authority of the Scriptures,

- I. To establish the general fact of God's moral government over men.

Of this fact, the Scriptures furnish such manifold and abundant proofs, that it is quite impossible to present them in all their fullness and force. What I propose is, to present some of them with as little amplification as may be, though at the sacrifice of their fullness and weight. These proofs will, of course, necessarily relate to the general fact of a moral government, as distinguished from any particular mode of its administration. A moral government, whether it consist of a merely legal system, or of law and grace combined, is still a moral government, and may be proved to exist by arguments which prove either particular form of it, or which prove neither in distinction from the other. I argue the fact of God's moral government over man, then,

1. From the account given of man's nature as a creature of God.

The first description of man is one which imparts the highest significance and grandeur to the work of creation as at first recorded. "God created man in his own image." What were this world in all its beauty and sublimity, without this creature man in the likeness of the Being that made him! No other being so exalted in the essential elements of his nature, could have been created; for he was essentially Godlike. He was therefore immortal; and as endued with intellect, affections, and elective power, a free agent, and from the necessity of his condition, as created

male and female, as well as in his relations to his Maker, a moral agent; capable of moral character and of moral action -- fitted to do the will, to accomplish the designs of God, thus to live and act in eternal fellowship with God, in doing good. The great end of his being was thus to bless God, to bless a sentient universe, and to bless himself in the highest degree; and yet he was not less capable of defeating this end, and promoting its fearful opposite in the highest misery. He was destined to be the progenitor of other myriads like himself. Would the benignant Father of existence forsake this work of his own hands, and leave these children of his power to the darkness and dreariness, to the self-disposal and ruin of an unguided and unprotected orphanage? or, would he assume that relation, and adopt that system of control which should combine every influence of wise and benignant authority, of discipline, of guidance and of guardianship, which is adapted in the highest degree to secure the end of their creation in perfection of character and of happiness, the system of a perfect moral government? Can we, in any case of moral reasoning, infer with greater assurance any truth from any reason? The first and most momentous fact then of divine revelation concerning man, decides that he was created, so that from the beginning he might live and act forever under the perfect moral government of God.

2. Man at the first was actually placed under the perfect moral government of God, when created and put into the garden of Eden to dress and keep it, "the Lord God commanded the man, saying: Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

Man indeed, by the institution of the Sabbath and the creation of Eve, may perhaps have already come under the full measure of moral obligation to obey, what are commonly called the first and second commandments of the law. Be this as it may, God first and formally instituted his moral government over man when he gave the law in Eden, which has now been cited. In giving this law, he in the first instance formally assumed his rightful authority as a moral ruler, claimed in his true character as "the Lord God" the right to govern, which imposes an

obligation to obey, gave a perfect rule of action, which demands the spirit of unqualified loyalty, and sustained his absolute dominion by the requisite legal sanction. Without here attempting to interpret, in its more particular meaning, the language of the requirement, and of the penalty of this law, it is sufficient for my present purpose, that it requires that spirit of loyalty, or that unqualified submission in all things which is due to an infinitely perfect Being in the relation of a moral governor, and fully sustains his authority by the legal sanction which is annexed to the requirement. God then, from the beginning, assumed the high relation of perfect moral governor over men, as moral and immortal beings.

3. This relation of God to men, is set before us, in different instances throughout the Scriptures, with similar formality and explicitness.

The moral government, as given in its first form to our first parents in Eden, was a merely legal dispensation. Immediately after their apostasy however, is revealed a promised Redeemer; and now this simply legal system, though it ceases not to be a perfect moral government, is greatly modified, by a divine and wonderful combination of law and grace in one system; in which, while there is an ample provision for the pardon and acceptance of penitent transgressors, neither the obligation of the law as a perfect rule of action, nor the authority of God as a perfect moral governor, is impaired. The reason is, that in pardoning the penitent or believing transgressor under the provision of an atonement, the authority of the lawgiver or moral governor is as fully sustained -- every iota of the influence of law to secure perfect obedience is as fully established, as it would be by the infliction of the legal penalty on the transgressor. And thus it is, as we shall see, that God throughout his entire Revelation ever presents himself before his moral kingdom in his untarnished glories as a just God and yet a Saviour; with his authority undiminished and unobscured, and with his claim to perfect obedience unconcealed and unrelaxed. And this he does, whether he claims obedience to the perfect rule of moral action, or compliance with the condition of his pardoning mercy. He ever appears enthroned in the high and absolute authority of a rightful moral governor. In proof of this assertion, the appeal is sufficient to the three more formal and signal dispensations, in which after man's

apostasy, God is presented in the Scriptures in this exalted character. As the first then, I refer to the covenant made with Abraham (Gen. xvii.). As in the law given to our first parents, the authoritative preface is, "THE LORD GOD commanded," &c.; so in the covenant made with Abraham, the Gospel thus preached to Abraham (Gal. iii. 8), we find substantially the same authoritative preface, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect." Here, the obligation to obedience to this great and comprehensive command is rested on God's authority or right to command, which imposes an obligation to obey; and his authority is rested on his perfect character, as "the Almighty God." I next refer to the Mosaic law -- the Jewish theocracy. I assume this to have been a representative system, exhibiting God's system of moral government over all men, as I shall hereafter attempt to prove that it was. Viewing it then as identical with God's moral government in its great requirements at least, God gave this law, saying: "I AM THE LORD THY GOD &c., thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. xx. 2). And again, Deut. v. 6, 10, and 12. But it is unnecessary to quote instances to our purpose. For we may say, the obligation of every command and every prohibition of the law as given by Moses, is made to depend on God's simple, naked authority, as this depends on his perfect character. Nor can it well be imagined that more abundant proof should be furnished, that God ever and constantly presented himself in the Old Testament in the one relation of a perfect moral governor, directly to Israel, and indirectly through the Mosaic dispensation to the rest of the world. If now we refer to the New Testament, what do we find there presented, but God in the same grand relation to men? What too is the comprehensive theme of the revelation which, by its light, is to eclipse in comparative darkness all prior revelations? what, but the kingdom of God -- the reign of God -- the perfect moral government of God through grace! What was the message of the forerunner, but a summons to prepare to receive this in its complete and final development? "Repent, for the kingdom," -- the reign, "of heaven is at hand;" and how was a nation moved by this announcement? What employed the ministry and life of the Messiah himself, but to affirm and establish the fact, that this kingdom of God had come as the consummation of all God's prior dispensations? When by the wonders of his divine power, he arrested the human mind to universal, thoughtful consideration, and excited it to every form of emotion, to admiration, surprise, anxiety, reverence, submission, sympathy, gratitude, joy, love, enmity, hate, and malice, as he unfolded

the nature, object, end of this kingdom, with the duties and the character of its subjects; when the people followed him from place to place, and multitudes into the city, as with the heart of one man, what was the subject, whether rightly apprehended or not by others, which he presented to consideration, and which produced this commotion among the people, what but the moral government of God? When he aimed to kindle and fill the hearts of his disciples with intense desires like his own, for the success and triumphs of this kingdom, by teaching them to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;" when to arouse thoughtless men to become his servants, by strenuous effort, and by action that should never falter, he told them that the kingdom of God suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force; when every command, invitation, exhortation, promise, threatening was only a summons to duty; what was his designs but that God should be obeyed by men?

When, after entering on his ministry, in all his intercourse with men, in villages and cities, at the house of the Pharisee, with the woman of Samaria, by the wayside, in the synagogue, in the market, before the high priest and Sanhedrim, and at the bar of Pilate, he recognized men as it were only as moral beings, and under God's authority; taught them their duty, and summoned them to perform it; called men to act, and by acting to obey God; when by his instructions, by his example, by his whole life, and even by his death, he taught not the philosophy of the Porch or the Academy, not physical nor political science, not the arts of intellectual culture, not even the relative and social duties by insulating men from God, but chiefly, subjection to God and God's authority in all human doings, when he required men to forsake all, to let the dead bury their dead, to take up the cross and follow him, to hate father and mother and wife and children, and even life itself. and go and proclaim the kingdom of God; what else was to be thought of, what else to be done, till the souls of men were brought under the moral dominion of God? And further, how absolutely did he ratify the standard of all moral perfection -- the perfect rule of action for all moral beings, first in relation to God, when in answer to the lawyer's question, he said, measuring man's duty by man's ability, "The first and great commandment of the law is, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." And then assuming that he who

should obey this first and great commandment, would love himself only as he ought, i.e., in that degree only which would be consistent with the glory of God, or with the highest good of all, he adds, in relation to man, "And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" in that degree, which is consistent with the glory of God, or the highest general good. And with this absolute moral perfection required of man by God's authority, is there no moral government on the part of God? In respect also to the condition of pardon or justification, the great and only rule of final judgment, how constantly and peremptorily did our Lord enforce compliance with this rule on the part of sinful men and on God's authority! "This," said he, "is the work of God, that Ye believe on him, whom he hath sent." "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." "Whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." In order to demolish the self-righteousness of the young ruler, and to convict him of the want of even the least moral rectitude, he says, "Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and then thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me." When he fixed the terms of eternal life and death, he declares, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not, shall be damned." What then, I may now ask, was the ministry of Christ while on earth, what in its aim and in its result, but a vindication and explanation of God's perfect moral government through grace over this sinful world? If now we refer to the apostles of our Lord, what engrossed the heart and soul, the labors, the toils, the life of these men, even unto death, especially of the great apostle, except the fuller exhibition of this moral system, in its nature, its principles, its comprehensiveness, its results, its glory, the whole foundation and superstructure of this kingdom, the moral government of God through grace? What, in a word, is the Gospel, but an exhibition of God's moral government, developed and established in all the strength of its authority, and in all the riches of its mercy, for the present obedience of a sinful world, for its speedy adjudication at the last tribunal, and the unchangeable retributions of eternity? And what will be when; the end cometh? He to whom, for its administration in this world, is given all power in heaven and on earth, will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all. With what emphasis and fullness of import then, may it be said, that the one single comprehensive relation, to which every other is subordinate and subservient, in which God is presented to men throughout his entire revelation, is the high and august relation of their perfect rightful moral governor. I remark-

4. That the history of God's providential government, exhibits its administration as subservient to his moral government.

I can only advert to some of the more striking events of his Providence as recorded in revelation, the design, tendencies, and effects of which are so obvious to a reflective mind, that they scarcely need be stated. Consider then, the condition of our first parents in Eden. This garden, as we may suppose, more beautiful and lovely than any elysium which the human imagination ever pictured, at once bespeaks its design and its fitness to become what it actually became, the happy residence of purity, love, and joy. If angels and archangels were not there, our first parents were there, adorned with absolute moral perfection; and God was there, a frequent, welcome visitant, with whom they walked in that filial affection and confidence which the presence and love of such a Creator must inspire.

Could sin ever enter such bosoms as these and in such a place or, if it did, could it find the slightest palliation in the circumstances or character of its inmates? Must not temptation, however powerful, still be weak amid such heavenly influences? Could it invade a place so much the emblem of the paradise above? It did, but when and only when, with astonishment it must be said, in the true meaning of the language, God had done what he could do to prevent the direful catastrophe of a necessary probation to these immortals. For what in any case, is anything, which can be called the power or the strength of inducements to disobey the living God, greater than the power of motive to obey him? All that can be supposed of fitness or tendency to disobedience, is a comparative trifle, It is not, then, for man to surmise a condition of moral beings, whatever temptation to sin be supposed, more auspicious to their endless moral perfection than was that of our first parents in Eden.

I next advert to the providential condition of our race, as the consequence of the entrance of sin into the world, and of its foreseen universal prevalence. The moral government of God over man in Eden being a

merely legal system, was now greatly modified by an economy of grace. The moral character of our first parents was changed, and with it, consequentially and prospectively, as the result of this trial of human nature, their descendants like themselves, on becoming moral agents, were from the first to become sinners. Man is no longer sinlessly obedient to the divine law under a merely legal dispensation, according to the principles of which, by one sin all must be lost, the world is to be no longer a paradise. The race, mankind, now consequentially and prospectively sinners, are at once placed under an economy of grace, with a divine provision for justification from many offenses. This change in character from sin to holiness in man, carried with it a corresponding change in the condition of human existence. A new system, not of retribution, but of trial and of moral discipline, was now imperiously demanded, and at once adopted. The world became one of thorns and thistles, and man was doomed to toil, to suffering, to sorrow, and to temporal death; not as the legal penalty of sin, but rather as such an expression of God's displeasure for his sin, that with other tendencies it might subserve the purpose of a reclaiming influence under the new economy of mercy, where one act of sincere though imperfect obedience would insure God's everlasting acceptance and favor. And now, who shall say that this condition of human existence, compared with that of Eden itself, in adaptation to promote and to secure man's moral wellbeing, is on the whole, and as a system of influence for this end, aside from its known effects, not for the better instead of for the worse? Be this as it may, who can fail to discern the subservience of these permanent providential arrangements of God, under a system of mercy, to the great design and end of his moral government? Who does not see in the fixed providential condition of every moral being in the world, a system or part of a system of moral discipline involving both goodness and severity eminently, even divinely adapted to the great ends of a moral probation for the allotments of eternity? Who, in view of the goodness of God, does not think of repentance for his sins against such a Benefactor, and even wish for and intend to secure, on this condition, his pardoning love and eternal friendship? Who, were there no disappointment, nor sickness, nor sorrow, nor suffering in the world, and especially no prospect of death, would be reclaimed to virtue, or be confirmed in her paths of pleasantness and peace? or rather, without these evils felt or feared, how hopeless in sin, how desperate in crime, would the world become! And yet, who that should pervert no gift of divine bounty, nor chastening of

divine love in its kind and gracious design, would not be reclaimed to holiness, to happiness, and to God? Nor would it be difficult to trace the benign influence of the present system of moral discipline on this world, in the confirmation of the saved in eternal holiness in another, nor to unfold the divine wisdom as well as love, which dictated the intercession, 'I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.' But not to dwell longer on this topic -- who does not perceive in the permanent arrangements of God's providence over sinful men, a most necessary and useful subservience to the great practical design of God's moral governments constant tendency, an ever-urgent influence in human experience, and resulting from the ceaseless operation and effects of physical laws, directed to this one great end? What but the most unreflecting presumption can deny their fitness to this end, or venture to propose a change for the better? What are they but so many proofs of God's moral government over men; and so many signal illustrations, that where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound?

The next event in the providence of God, which I notice, is the destruction of the world by the deluge. This is an instance, not of chastening love, but of vindictive wrath; of the infliction of the full penalty of sin; of the full and just retribution of impenitent, unbelieving sinners. Fifteen centuries had elapsed since man was created; his wickedness had now become great in the earth; the warnings of Noah had been disregarded for one hundred and twenty years; wickedness was triumphant; it repented God that he had made man on the earth, and now the hour of retributive judgment has arrived. Nothing stays the execution of the threatening. The heavens are clothed in blackness; the light of day is extinguished by clouds thickening, darkening, and foreboding the hastening tempest; the awful artillery of the skies shakes the earth; the guilty millions are appalled with consternation and dismay; agonies are depicted on every countenance; the child clings to its mother, the wife to her husband in unutterable terrors but does God desist? The waters rise rapidly; earth, air, and sea tremble; the fountains of the great deep break up -- and where now are the myriads of these creatures of God? Save one family, the wrath of God has swept the world of every inhabitant. Never since the earth stood, have men witnessed such a terrific, and, as it were, sensible

demonstration in the execution of the legal penalty of sin -- such a manifestation of the wrath of God in upholding his authority as the just and rightful moral governor of men. Nor is there any thing, in this fearful retributions to surprise us. It was for the wickedness of a world, which had proved itself incorrigible under the government of the God who made it, and who, though punishment is his strange work, must either inflict it, or abandon that rightful dominion over his moral universe, which has all the worth of his own infinite Being.

Here I might dwell on another event, though less extensive in its effects, scarcely less impressive than the former -- the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, saith an apostle, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

I might here appeal to another providential event, as not less explicit in giving the same instruction. The confusion of tongues, and the dispersion at Babel, are prominent among the events of patriarchal history, which were brought to pass only in subservience to the designs of God as the moral ruler of the world.

And next, that event which, in its relations and results, pervades the entire history of God's providence over this world to the present hour, the calling of Abraham, with its typical covenant and promises of earthly blessings, here demands a particular consideration, of which subject however, I shall speak only in general terms. I ask then, what was the calling of Abraham, with that covenant of earthly promises, which was made with him and his posterity? It was plainly, and as it were exclusively, a typical dispensation, comprising in all its prominent details, probably the fullest, richest, most impressive instruction concerning God's moral government which, in that age of the world, could be given, with the faintest prospect of its utility. If we interpret it and understand it, as the apostle has taught us to do, in its higher spiritual import, what is it in its precept, "walk before me, and be thou perfect," but an authoritative rule of action, as the condition of God's acceptance and favor; in its

promise of an earthly country, but the promise also of a heavenly country, wherefore God is not ashamed to, be called their God; in its promise to the patriarch of an only son, and from him the innumerable multitude of children of the promise counted as his seed; in its commanded sacrifice of this only son on Mount Moriah, received again by Abraham as from the dead, in a figure; in the promise, not to seeds as of many, but to thy seed as of one, which is Christ; and I may add, in the indirect but distinct recognition by the act of Abraham, of Melchisedec as a priest of the Most High God, authorized, by divine designation, to officiate for all the true worshipers of God, as the medium of acceptable worship, being also king of righteousness and king of peace, and typifying another priest according to the same order; even in its prescribed right of circumcision, as the seal of the righteousness of faith -- the token of the covenant -- sealing the validity of its every higher, as well as of its every lower promise, I say, if interpreting this covenant with Abraham, as that which, in its representative character, was designed to instruct men in these higher truths, what is it but such a representation of God's moral government through grace, over this sinful world, that the Apostle justly calls it, "the Gospel which before was preached unto Abraham?" In its primary import, how was it fulfilled in its every promise! In its spiritual, or secondary import, how were its practical effects secured in that cloud of witnesses who embraced it, who confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth, who died in faith, looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God! Thus God, as it appears from his own history of his providence, had, for so many long centuries, been, as it were, compelled by the degradation and incorrigible wickedness of men, to adopt the severer modes of his moral administration to sustain his authority. These, from the apostasy in Eden to the calling of Abraham, though blended with many decisive forms and proofs of his mercy, were yet so ineffective that now, as if it were all that divine wisdom and mercy could do, he seems to abandon, with the exception of one family -- the rest of the world, and to leave them without the reclaiming influence of any further revelation of his truth. In respect to this one family however, by a fuller and brighter revelation of divine truth than any he had before made, he adopts a new expedient for the accomplishment of his great design as a moral ruler. He does not, in apparent discouragement, as by the wickedness of man before the deluge, now, as then, destroy him in his wrath, but resorts rather to a new and more perfect system of influences to reclaim and to save; confining it

however, in its first form, to a representative mode of revelation, and this to a single family, as they may be able to bear it -- and designing, as the subsequent history shows, further additions, through successive generations, and even through protracted ages. What significance and moment does such a course of providence impart to God's determination to maintain a perfect moral government over this world, unto its full and final consummation? His providential purposes will not fail through want of providential expedients. Delay in the execution of these purposes is not abandonment; counteraction is not defeat, nor hindrance discomfiture. What are the rage and the wrath, the vain imaginings, the contempt and the scoffs of a world, as ignorant and weak as it is wicked? "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh!" What too, are the sins, and sorrows, and sufferings, and death of this temporary scene; what the rise and fall of empires; the desolations and carnage of war; the ravages of famine and pestilence; the prolonged reign, crimes, cruelties, of despots and tyrants -- what are all those evils of earth, which seem to human hope perpetual; what though that adversary of God, so successful in Paradise, seems ever since to be achieving new and more permanent conquests; what if, from the beginning, the many be lost and the few saved; and all things continue as they were; what of all this; what is time to Him who inhabiteth eternity; what is earth even, with all its moral beings, in all their generations, in all their interests, in all their immortality; what is all this but an infinitesimal, when the question is -- whether God shall be God, and reign in the glories of a perfect moral governor, in the eternity which is yet to come?

5. I now refer to the Theocracy of Israel -- the national government, which God himself administered over that people by Moses.

In this event, or temporary dispensation of his providence, especially as an appendage to the Abrahamic covenant, it is claimed, that God is revealed in a still more decisive, full, and impressive aspect of a rightful moral governor, than under any prior dispensation. Unfortunately however, for our own present purpose, there is in respect to the character and nature of the Jewish theocracy, so much that is unsettled among theologians and commentators; there is so much, in my view, that is

imperfect and erroneous in the views and opinions commonly entertained respecting it, that it can scarcely be made use of in our present argument; at least, that it cannot be so used as to give its full force to this argument. On this account I shall defer any attempt to present it in this manner, until I have more fully investigated its character and its relations in several subsequent lectures. In the mean time, I will only say here, that in my view, the law which God gave to Israel by Moses, was, in its primary and proper character, simply a national government; and one which, while resembling in its essential characteristics the civil government of Egypt, and the civil governments of contemporary nations, yet, compared with modern systems of civil governments, was peculiar in many prominent respects. It was thus peculiar, inasmuch as God assumed toward this people the twofold relation of National King and Tutelary Deity; established this government as a representative system, i.e., to represent his higher system of moral government over men as moral and immortal beings, and administered it through grace, and by a supernatural providence. That such were the essential features of this system in its primary and proper character, so prominently presented and decisively proved, as to be eminently fitted to arrest the attention and control the practical convictions of this nation, I hope fully to show hereafter. Proceeding on this assumption respecting the nature of this system of civil government, I need only to ask any one at all acquainted with the Scriptural narrative, to reflect on the extreme degradation, ignorance, and stupidity of this idolatrous people, now just delivered from their Egyptian bondage, and then say whether the human mind can devise a system, especially as an appendage to the Abrahamic covenant, so perfectly fitted to reclaim them from their idolatry, to the worship and service of the only living and true God? To be convinced on this subject one needs but to know that this people, from their prior education, habits, and usages, in Egypt, knew, and could know nothing of a civil government, except in the form of a theocracy, and of course, as representing another and higher system of government over men as moral and immortal beings; and then to reflect on what, in the providence of God, preceded, attended, and followed the giving of their national law on Mount Sinai, even from their deliverance from Egypt to the coming of their Messiah. It may be surely said, if it be possible to show one thing by another, clearly, unambiguously, impressively, then the theocracy of Israel, as a symbol or type, representing God's higher system of moral government, is without a conceivable parallel. What a striking proof of

this relation of one system to the other must thus have been furnished to this people, and thus what a constant memorial in their engrossing ritual and other services, in their ceaseless assemblages, in their signal prosperity when obedient and loyal to their national king and their national God, and in their signal calamities when disobedient and rebellious, must have been presented before them every day and every hour of God's perfect moral government through grace over them as moral and immortal beings.

6. I now refer to what are commonly called the great or leading doctrines of the Scriptures.

Concerning the reason or the propriety of this somewhat limited application of the term, I shall not now inquire. Under this name are included certain great and prominent facts or truths of the Scriptures, which have a most important relation to, and connection with, the moral and immortal interests of men. Among these I shall notice as briefly as may be, the doctrines of the depravity or sinfulness of all men; of the atonement of Christ; of justification by faith through grace; of decrees and election; of regeneration by the influence of the Holy Spirit; and of the final, general judgment. Assuming the truth of each of these doctrines, in its just, Scriptural form of statement, I claim, that it incontrovertibly and necessarily implies and proves, that God administers a perfect moral government over this world of human beings.

We refer in the first place to the doctrine of the depravity or sinfulness of all men in their first moral character. What then is sin, as presented in God's revelation, but the transgression of law? Not only is the transgression of God's law, sin; it is the only thing which in the Scriptures is called sin. All other theories, conceptions, notions of sin, formed by theologians, orthodox or heterodox, or to be found in confessions, creeds, and catechisms, are brought to naught by the light of God's word, and that of human consciousness. Miracles, if the solecism of supposing them for the purpose may be allowed, could not, without disproving the intuitions of the human mind, prove the contrary. But if sin on the part of

men is the transgression of the law of God, then there is a law of God to be transgressed -- a perfect rule of action sustained by the requisite legal sanctions, and having the full authority of the Lawgiver: in other words, God administers a perfect moral government over men in this world.

I next advert to the atonement of Christ. This is a measure of God's providing, that he might sustain his authority as a moral governor; or that he might be just in the justification of the believing sinner. The LOGOS of God, by the most intimate union, by the closest possible approximation to identity of being with the man Christ Jesus, became, with him, what is, and what must be conceived and Spoken of, according to all analogous modes of conceiving and speaking, as one person, one at least for the great purpose of the intimate union. He was the Messiah of the Jews, the Redeemer of the world, the Lord of glory, who was crucified, the man that is God's fellow. He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, in the form of a servant and fashion of a man, became obedient unto death. It is Divinity humanized to suffer; it is humanity defiled to atone. His atonement for sin is an event without a parallel -- the mightiest miracle of earth -- the wonder and joy of heaven -- revealing the manifold wisdom of God to principalities and powers in heavenly places, and showing God in all the majesty of his justice, and in all the riches of his mercy, toward this sinful world. No similar transaction, can we suppose, has ever taken place on the theater of the universe, nor will ever take place again in the annals of eternity. "It stands amid the lapse of ages and the waste of worlds, a single, solitary monument" of that august relation of God to which itself and all things else are subservient; and when these heavens and this earth shall be no more -- when, at the final consummation, God shall be all in all, there will still be the Lamb in the midst of the throne -- eternity's memorial of God's perfect moral dominion, through grace, over this sinful world.

I next refer to the doctrine of justification by faith. Without here noticing the variety of opinions on this subject, I shall only state my own. Justification before God, according to the Scriptures, is that act of God whereby, as the righteous Lawgiver and final Judge of men, he authoritatively determines or causes believing sinners to stand right in

respect to the sanctions of his law. The doctrine of justification, as it asserts or teaches this act of God, unfolding it in its dependencies and relations, its processes, its conditions, its attendants, its issues, and these in all their own intrinsic harmonies and perfect adaptation to the grand ultimate result, may, not inappropriately, be viewed as entire Christianity -- the whole of God's revelation, as it, is related in every part and every element, to the manifestation and glory of God in his moral dominion. If we go back to the counsels of God before the foundation of the world, and trace them as developed in all his works of creation and providence, and in all his acts and doings of grace and of mercy toward men as moral beings, terminating with his one great and last act of earth and of time -- the justification of the righteous at his final tribunal -- what else do we see but God in the administration of his perfect moral government through grace?

The doctrine of God's decrees claims our notice, as one, according to the Scriptures, simply teaching one great fact or truth of purely practical relations -- the fact or truth that God wills or purposes the existence of all actual events. Without it, without the great fact which constitutes the doctrine, the sole basis of many of the most momentous duties which God requires of men would be wholly subverted. Without it, what ground were there for gratitude under blessings, for submission under trials, for trust in the present, for hope in the future? On the throne of Providence we could see only some blind, fortuitous energy, with utter indifference to the wants and the woes of dependent creatures, disposing of their allotments without a thought of good or of evil to them. We should indeed be the children of an infinite Being; but exiled from his paternal love and care, we should have no Father! Thus forsaken of its Maker, what a dark and somber world were this! But how is the scene changed and brightened with a designing God on the throne -- an all-perfect Being, whose wisdom and whose will direct every event! Under a Providence which executes such counsels of the Most High, how obvious and imperious are the claims of his authority for that class of ennobling virtues, which arise from the diverse and almost ever-varying conditions of our earthly existence, whether prosperous or adverse -- virtues which have eminently adorned the character of righteous men among saints and martyrs, and pre-eminently of Apostles, imparting patience and

perseverance in their labors and toils, to the end -- constant rejoicing in life and signal triumph in death! Under the accomplishment of such "decrees," whose gratitude shall not express its praise; whose son shall be silenced, even by afflictions and trials; whose heart shall be made faint with the trembling of fear, or caused to sink by the chill of despair; whose submission, trust, confidence, hope, peace, joy, shall not cheer and bless his existence on earth, come what may; in a word, whose will shall not be one with and lost in God's will? If this be duty -- if any other thought be impiety, rebellion, then how does the doctrine -- the fact that God, for reasons worthy of himself, purposes every actual event in this world and in all worlds -- show his rightful and authoritative claim to all those virtues and graces of human character which he demands under all the various changes and dispensations of his providence? If God has no will that what takes place shall take place, how can his will be recognized in respect to any event? And then, what can exempt from hardened ingratitude, or save from distrust and fear, from murmurings repining, and despair? But in view of such a will of God -- a will of which every event, as providential, is the expression -- how are enforced the requirements of his authority, that in the reception of blessings "we render to the Lord according to his benefits;" that in the perplexity and severity of our trials we say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him;" and when in the deepest midnight of mystery, his mighty hand seems to be crushing us, how welcome and sustaining his own voice -- "Be STILL, and know that I am God!" How God's providential dominion thus reveals and enthrones him in his moral dominion! What assurance for the righteous, that from behind the darkest clouds and tempests the Eternal Sun of light, and life, and joy will soon break forth to cheer every scene of earth, or, as in a moment, in the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! With what an emphasis of authority then, does God ever summon us to those moral duties which alone and so eminently fit us for our earthly condition, be it what it may.

The next doctrine which I have specified as worthy of notice in this connection, is the doctrine of Election. As I propose largely to consider this doctrine hereafter, and particularly to exhibit its practical relations and tendencies, I shall here only say concerning it, that, in my view, it has an eminently salutary practical tendency in respect to both the saint and the

sinner; that in these relations it is revealed and employed in the Scriptures, as subservient to the great design of God's moral government, and thus becomes one of the most decisive illustrations and proofs of such a government on the part of God over this sinful world.

I now refer to what by theologians is commonly called the doctrine of Regeneration through the influence of the Holy Spirit. The term regeneration in the New Testament occurs in only two instances, and in both in a highly figurative meaning, as is also all other correlate phraseology in these writings. I shall now assume, what I hope satisfactorily to prove hereafter, that this change in man is a moral change -- a change of his moral character, consisting in an intelligent elective preference of God to the world; that change which is required in such divine commands as, "make ye a new heart and a new spirit;" or as, "repent ye, and be converted;" and in description, as, "for it is God who worketh in you to will," &c.; or, "the love of God is shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost;" or, "ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." This change then, in sinful man, thus presented in literal language, should not be mistaken and misrepresented in its true nature, as it has so commonly been by theologians and in confessions of faith, merely because to describe the greatness of the change, it is spoken of as a new birth, or as a resurrection from the dead, or as a new creation. It plainly cannot be literally all these, nor yet any one of them. It is true, that the change is never brought to pass in the human mind without the supernatural influence of the Spirit of God. Is it not therefore man's own act as truly as any other? Did not apostles remember through a supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit, and yet was not the act of remembering their own act -- the act of their own mental power called memory? If God works in men to will, is not the act of willing exclusively their act, and done proximately in the exercise of their own power to will? If the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, is not the act of loving exclusively our own, and proximately the act of our own power to love God? If we obey the truth through the Spirit, is not the act of obeying our own act, and as such, an act of our power to obey? If it be said that God in regeneration gives man the power to will morally right, or to obey, or produces some other constitutional change in the mind, called a new taste or relish, diverse from right moral action. I answer, that to

create any new mental power or property, is not to produce a new moral character, nor that which necessarily insures such a character; that such a change in man is never taught in the Scriptures; and further, that the Scriptures have not only never taught that man is unable to do his duty perfectly, i.e., to act morally right, but the contrary, in the express terms of the divine law, the only standard or rule of absolute moral perfections. In this perfect rule, man's duty to love God is made to consist simply in the use of his power to love him, and limited by his power to love. And has man then no heart, no mind, no soul, no strength, i.e., no power to love God, until he does love him? Is it said that he has power to love God if he will, i.e., can will morally right, if he will? This is plain nonsense in every possible meaning of the language. Is it then said, that he has power to love God, or to act morally right, when he does, or when he certainly will, love God, or act morally right? This is plainly impossible and absurd, unless he has the power prior to the act, and of course power used or exerted in the act. Should man then do what he can do, in respect to loving God, as God's law requires, he would become absolutely morally perfect.

In this view then, of the nature of the change in regeneration; in view of God's authoritative requirement of the change on the part of man, and especially in view of the work of the Spirit of God in the production of the change, a more decisive manifestation of God, as the perfect moral governor of men cannot well be imagined, than that furnished by the Scriptural doctrine of regeneration. The change in the mind is no other than the change, by a sinful moral being, of his own moral character. It is, thus viewed, the change which takes place, by changing as his own act that governing principle -- that controlling disposition -- which is no other than an elective preference of God to Mammon, and which alone constitutes a good or holy heart, the good treasure of the heart, the good tree which bringeth forth good fruit, the pure fountain which sends forth the sweet waters. Hence the authoritative requirement, "Make the tree good;" and again, "Purify your hearts." It is that change in which man, in the use of his own moral powers ACTS ALL; and God, by his Spirit, causes him thus to ACT ALL; a change in which man, through the supernatural influence of the Spirit of God, uses his own complete powers of a moral agent in acting morally right, when he had before used

them only in acting morally wrong. Now, where this is the only conceivable morally right change in man; when God, by the whole weight of his authority as an all-perfect Being, requires and justly requires, and can justly require no other change in man; when this change, as an act of obedience to God, cannot be demanded, or even conceived to exist, except as an act of submission to God's authority as the rightful moral governor of man; what can be said or thought, but that God according to the Scriptures, sustains this high relation to man? But this is not all. When man, thus a complete moral agent, and as much so as were he to become perfectly obedient to God; when thus able to obey God perfectly, without the least influence of the Holy Spirit, and when therefore, he ought thus to obey him without such influence, he yet willfully, i.e., with willfulness, disobeys him, and will in fact thus continue, without the interposing influence of the Holy Spirit to disobey forever -- God, in his compassion to man in this self-ruined condition, is moved to send his Holy Spirit into the world. And now, what is, what can be the design, the END aimed at by the mission of this divine Agent into this world of redeemed sinners? Is it to transform the trees of the forest, or "the stones of the street, into moral agents; or to change the physical properties or physical laws of things created -- things, including man himself, pronounced by their Creator to be "very good?" The thought were irreverent, for it were contemptuous of the work of God. Is it to impart to sinners, in any sense or degree, the powers of complete moral agents? This thought were still more irreverent not to say, were blasphemous. For shall a perfect God count, or consider, or treat any of his creatures as sinners, who have not sinned in the use, and therefore in the full possession, of the powers of moral agents? Who has heard of this sort or species of sinners, except under the orthodox patent of Saint Augustine? Who has ever supposed, except some early converted heathen philosophers (converted long after the death of the apostles), and their more modern disciples, that the grand errand on which the Holy Spirit is sent into this world, is either to create powers in the soul of man, which, if men are sinners, are already created in it; or, so to finish God's work in the creation of the soul, that what at first is a moral automaton shall become a moral agent, and so capable of moral action? Surely, the mission of the Holy Ghost into this world of redeemed sinners, planned and purposed in the eternal councils of the Godhead, must have an object worthy of such an embassy. Was it then, under the moral exigencies of a lost race, to make other beings either animate or

inanimate than moral beings, partakers of God's holiness? Or was it, by a mysterious influence, which he knew how to employ for the godlike purpose -- a purpose not less godlike because so obvious -- that of leading moral and immortal beings to use their high powers morally right, which hitherto they had used morally wrong? The true answer to this question shows at once how intent God is to accomplish, so far as may be, his great design as the moral governor of men. It must thus appear, that when God saw that law and authority, all the love and mercy of redemption, all the awards of eternal retribution; all argument, persuasion, entreaty, motive; even all that truth could utter, would be in vain to save; then, rather than abandon to hopeless sin, and so lose these alienated, sinful men forever from his friendship and favor, he determined. to send his Holy Spirit to reform, and thus to save some of an otherwise hopeless race. By what higher proof, can we well imagine, could God evince the august and eternal reality of his moral dominion over men? I add but one more of these proofs --

Lastly, The doctrine of final judgment.

This is not the place to unfold the Scriptural account of this transaction, nor is it my present purpose to attempt it. The principal fact with which I am now concerned, is, that God will then "RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS;" that "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things, done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Such is the object, and such will be the issues, of the last day of man's history in this world -- that day, for which all other days are made. The scenes, the events, all the transactions of this day -- according to the Scriptural representation -- in their grandeur and glory, their terrors and their triumphs, befit the catastrophe of earth and of time, and not less, the Being who sitteth on the throne, for the consummation of his moral dominion over a world of moral and immortal beings. How the results of this day will dissipate all human doubt, respecting the most prominent truth -- the greatest FACT, concerning God made known by God's revelation -- God on the throne; God, in his own right, by virtue of his eternal power and Godhead; God, in his intrinsic majesty and glory; God,

with that investiture of authority which his infinite perfection gives; God, on the throne of perfect moral dominion!

REMARKS.

1. In this view of the moral government of God, I am constrained to ask, Have the orthodox part of the Christian ministry, in one important respect, rightly divided the word of truth?

I do not ask whether they have denied, nor whether they have not recognized by distinct implication in many forms, nor whether they have not assumed in some general form, God's moral government over men. But I ask, whether, according to the Scriptural standard of exhibition, they have not given an inferior prominence to God's moral government compared with that which they have given to his providential government? Have they not, in their sermons and other writings, placed God's moral government in the background, and his providential government, as including what have been esteemed and called the great doctrines of the Scriptures, in the foreground? Have they even attempted to unfold the former in its nature, in its elementary and fundamental principles, and its momentous relations, as fully and thoroughly as they have the latter? Have they not dwelt upon, and given an almost exclusive prominence to the so-called doctrines, e. g., the Five Points of Calvinism, such as the doctrines of decrees, election, depravity, justification by faith only, regeneration, the perseverance of the saints; or, what is worse, such dogmas as imputation, imputed sin and imputed righteousness, original sin, limited atonement, man's inability to perform his duty or act morally right? Even without supposing error in what they have taught, have not their teachings respected man's dependence on God, rather than man's moral obligation to obey God? Have they ever and always held man, as the Bible does, up to his high and ceaseless relation to God, as subject to his authority in all his doings and bound to act in all, under the influence of this authority, so that without acting under it, he cannot act morally right in obedience to God in a single instance; as that

influence, under which he is able to act and bound to act without any other; as that influence under which, whatever other influence may coincide with and be concomitant with this, he must act, or he violates his ceaseless moral obligation and sins against God? He must work out his own salvation, under God's authority requiring him so to act and to do, though God works in him to will and to do; and is as truly bound to perform the work under God's authority without the co-operation of God as with it. Have the orthodox ministry then, thus pressed men to act morally right under God's authority, grace or no grace? Have they not taught them to depend on the Holy Spirit to give them power to act morally right, rather than with some hope, more or less, for God's undeserved unpromised, sovereign influence, to put themselves at once to the use of their own perfect moral powers to act morally right in so acting? Have they not, to a great extent, taught a mode of dependence on the Holy Spirit, which, instead of enhancing, as it does, man's obligation to act morally right in immediate obedience to God's authority, absolutely subverts man's obligation so to act, and God's authority to require him so to act? How momentous the difference between teaching the one, instead of the other of these modes of dependence on the Spirit of God! If the latter is error, how great is that error! And yet how common! On this question of fact, I appeal to the ablest theologians, from Augustine to President Edwards, and to the more eminent of those who have followed of the same general class of divines; and I ask, who has placed the human conscience under the weight and pressure of God's authority to immediate duty as the Bible does? Who has presented man's dependence on the Holy Spirit, and man's obligations as a moral agent, in such a manner as to make the precise impression in respect to right moral action, which the authoritative commands of God are designed to make and should make. that such action is man's duty, and only duty, the act which under every summons of God to duty, even in the thought of it, is to be done, or God will be disobeyed? And more than this, where in the whole range of theological literature can be found any thing, which even in pretense can be esteemed a thorough treatise, on the high relation of God, to which his every other relation is subservient, that of the supreme and rightful moral governor of his moral creation? I deny not that this subject has been taken up and Considered in parts, and in parts applied as the exigency may have required, to some particular questions in theological controversy, though with very defective and false views of the very parts of the subject thus considered. And how should it be

otherwise, than that erroneous and false views should result from the partial modo of treating a subject so comprehensive? But when or by whom, either in Natural or Revealed Theology, has any satisfactory or even plausible attempt been made to unfold the moral government of God, in its comprehensiveness, in its fundamental principles, its essential and immutable relations, and its diverse forms of administration? No such attempt is known, or suspected by the writer. If this be so, is it as it should be? If this be so, to what purpose is what is called systematic or scientific theology, except to incur, as it has often incurred, the censures of many eminent men, both theologians and others? If this be so, to what purpose can it be claimed, that hitherto there has been any consistent, truthful interpretation of the sacred oracles, any which exempts them in some most important respects, I do not say from groundless, but from unanswerable objections? And if this be so, how can the honest mind believe without doubts, and difficulties, and perplexities, the teachings of Revelation, beyond certain general forms of truth, or truth combined with diluting error, which may suffice for moral responsibility and the conversion of a few sinners, oh! how few! -- but scarcely for the perfecting of the saints, or the edifying of the body of Christ? And if these things be so, and the greater part of Christendom, even the greater part of the visible Church of God, are not the better but rather the worse for divine revelation, having only that knowledge of God, which will not save, but rather destroy, then to what purpose does the meridian sun of Christianity shine on the world? Comparatively, how ineffectual are its beams on the hardened soil! God intended that its light should be -- and so it would have been but for the sloth and perverseness of men -- as the light of seven days, with its benign and rejoicing efficacy. But in this respect, how impaired and lost are its splendors! how dark and dreary the moral desolation of the earth! God intrusted his revelation to his Church, to men no longer taught by his inspiration, to be defended and explained, to be unfolded to the intellect, and impressed on the conscience of a world, in all its riches of truth and grace, as the power of God to salvation. But how soon, and for long ages, did its combination with error, and its consequent obscurity and weakness, betray the human instrumentality which so imperfectly, and even faithlessly discharged the sacred trust! Sad waste of the treasure committed to earthen vessels! Fearful catastrophe of this gift of a benignant God, not yet alleviated, still less retrieved! It is the fault of man -- it is the fault of the Christian Church: it is more -- it is the fault of the Christian ministry.

2. How obvious and imperious is the demand on the Christian ministry for the thorough investigation of the nature and principles of God's moral government over men!

There was a time when what was called doctrinal preaching usurped a preeminence in our pulpits over what was called practical preaching. The occasion of this prevalence of doctrinal preaching was the doctrinal errors or false doctrines, which it was designed and required to expose and overthrow. The calamity was, that it combined the severity of gospel truth with much error respecting man's inability and dependence, opposed to common sense and the Scriptures, a combination peculiarly fitted to render it offensive to a large portion of the people. And yet the truth which it so prominently inculcated, being often blended with exhortations to immediate repentance, and softened by the appeals of divine mercy, and pressed on the conscience, had more real gospel in them -- more of the worth, and light, and power, and efficacy of truth -- than any and all other contemporary preaching; the latter being little more than the denial of all wholesome truth, and the inculcation of a soulless morality. But not to go further in historic details, useful as they might be, I wish to say, that according to the Scriptural standard, all doctrinal preaching should be practical, and all practical preaching should be doctrinal. The truth of the Gospel -- God's truth -- is both. Distinguish its elements as you will by words, every divine precept involves doctrine, and every divine doctrine involves precept. Doctrine has a causative relation to precept, and precept a dependent, relation to doctrine. Take away these relations between them, and you destroy both, by depriving each of one essential element of its relative nature. The doctrine furnishes the obligation, the reason, the motive, the nature and direction of the precept, and the precept, of course, derives all these reciprocal relations from the doctrine. Doctrine is the teaching which instructs the mind of the people in that truth which is authoritative and designed to influence and control the whole man as a moral being; which enlightens, guides, determines, consecrates the whole moral activity of a self-active nature to its true end, and so fashions immortal energies into perpetual and perfect moral character. It is truth then, as practical or productive of action; truth as binding, fixing the whole inner and outer man to action

and doing; truth, controlling, reigning, authoritative; truth, manifested by revealing God's moral government in its nature, its principles, relations, power, results, which is the Gospel of God. And who, if not they whose high calling is emphatically to be workers together with God in the harvest of God's husbandry; who, if not they who are to be honored as wise master-builders of God's spiritual temple; who, if not they who are called to promote, and, as far as may be accomplished, secure the end for which God created and governs this world, who, if not the ministers of Christ, ought to arouse this dead world to life and action? What mighty energies are here perverted in sin, and devoted to its work! How ought they to be summoned by the cry of the watchman, as in thunder tones, to that new, and highest, and holiest productive exercise and activity which shall constitute co-operation and companionship with God! I speak not merely of overt external acts or doings. I speak of the energies of the moral man, the energies of the intellect, of the heart, of the will, of affections, emotions, as these are the life and soul of all overt doings. Who, in preaching the Gospel, shall not aim at the same end at which God aims in revealing the Gospel; that end to which creation, providence, laws, precepts, ordinances, grace, reason, conscience, revelation, every thing else, is subservient, right moral action in principle and practice? Who shall not use the same means for this end which God uses, that truth or system of truth which is embodied in his perfect moral government; which ever places man in the attitude of an agent, teaching his dependence on God only as a reason for acting and doing? Who shall not aim to make the same impression on the human mind which God aims to make by his commands to act, his exhortations to act, his invitations, his entreaties to act, thus throwing every iota of responsibility for the issues of eternity on man, as an agent, for what he does; for the deeds done in the body? What shall hinder? Not one doctrine or truth, except perverted and distorted into falsehood -- and then hated and fit to be hated; not one, in its just, real nature and aspect as truth, or as the truth which it is, does not carry with it all its light and beauty and loveliness to the human mind; not one which is not the voice of mercy to those who need mercy, which is not attractive and winning like the music of heaven. Oh! how little do they who hate, oppose, and reject the great and peculiar truths of Christianity, know of these truths! Even cold indifference cannot be maintained and cherished in any mind, without a cherished, willful ignorance of their nature -- their divine fitness to bless man. But how shall the people understand without hearing? And how

shall they hear without the Christian ministry? Ay, and how with a Christian ministry, who do not understand that system of divine truth, which is nothing more and nothing less than a revelation of God's perfect moral government; and how shall they understand it so as to give, I do not say, a tolerable degree of perfection to their teaching, but so as to give it that increased power on the human mind, which may be given it, and which one day awaits it; how, without a more, a far more laborious investigation of its nature, its relations, its harmonies, and its divine adaptations, than has yet been furnished by the incoherent and clashing systems of even Protestant Theology; how, at least in such degree, that if they assert some of its momentous truths, they shall not as often contradict them; how, so as to show that God's revealed moral government, the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, is by him designed and fitted, not to hold a world of moral beings like this in the slumbers of spiritual death, but to rouse and move and stir them to the instant, the ceaseless, the joyous activities of that spiritual life which is the only and absolute perfection of a spiritual being

LECTURE II: PRELIMINARY.

Introduction. -- Discussion Involves the consideration of the Mosaic Economy. -- Mistaken or defective views. -- As preliminary, we ask, What is a Theocracy?

I PROPOSE to unfold my views of the nature of God's moral government, as presented in the Scriptures, by considering the law by which this government is administered.

In the proposed discussion of this subject, I shall confine my inquiries to three forms in which God has given law to man, viz., the law which he gave to our first parents in Eden; that which he gave to Israel by Moses; and that which he gave to the world by Christ and his apostles.

In pursuing the investigation of this comprehensive subject, it would seem to be the most natural method, to direct our attention in the first place to the law of Eden. This has been the common method with theological writers; and has, if I mistake not, occasioned serious difficulties and many errors in the interpretation of important parts of the sacred writings.

There have been, I think, two common assumptions in respect to the law of Eden which are groundless. The one is, that this law, which, in the sum of its requirement, was both a rule of action and of judgment, as first given to our first parents in Eden, has continued to be such to their descendants, without modification or change. It is indeed, quite undeniable that this law of God, requiring absolute moral perfection of man, is, ever has been, and ever will be, obligatory on all men as a rule of action. But it is obviously impossible, that under that economy of mercy which was instituted and revealed on the first apostasy, it should also be a rule of judgment. This would secure the final condemnation of all, and render redemption nugatory. God will judge the world according to the Gospel. I say no more on this topic at present, as I shall have occasion to resume it in another connection.

The other assumption to which I refer is, that the law of Eden is given to us by Moses in the very words in which it was given to our first parents by their Creator; and that hence the real question concerning its import is simply how they understood the language of this law.

Without however, provoking a controversy respecting the origin of language, and without attempting to show how Adam did or could understand the law from the words of the law, I advert to a fact which wholly supersedes the necessity of such inquiries, viz., that the language of the law given in Eden is the language of Moses, the Jewish historian; and this, whether he compiled the narrative from prior records or not. As the narrator of this transaction, Moses must have used the language of his own age and country. Of course his language must have conveyed those ideas, or that meaning, to his countrymen, which their usage gave

it, and this meaning must have. been the same which was originally conveyed by the Creator to our first parents. Whether, therefore, the terms of this law, as it is recorded by Moses, be the ipsissima verba which God addressed to them or not; or whether any language, properly so called, was the medium of communicating to them what these words now express, as employed by Moses according to Jewish usage; this is wholly immaterial to our purpose. If we can determine the import of this language, in the time of Moses, we can determine the true import of what we call the law given to Adam.

These remarks, with a little acquaintance with the controversies respecting the import of the law of Eden, will be sufficient to show that if we would obtain just views of this law, our inquiries must be directed first to the import of the Mosaic law. At the same time, many other of the great questions in Scriptural theology, and among them that of our justification before God, depend on correct and adequate views of the law given to Israel. Before then, proceeding to the topics proposed respecting the law of God's moral government, I shall attempt, as preparatory to the discussion of them, to present to some extent, what I consider just views of the Mosaic law.

Here a wide field of inquiry opens before us. I propose only to give you some general views which may serve to guide your own future investigations.

It has been extensively maintained that the government which God administered over Israel was a theocracy; in other words, that God, as the governor of this people, simply assumed toward them the two great relations of national king and tutelary deity; and that accordingly, the laws which he gave them by Moses were simply national laws, and were enforced simply by temporal sanctions, involving to a great extent, supernatural interpositions in their execution. On this ground the learned Warburton has founded an argument for the divine legation of Moses, of this nature, viz., that Moses is the only human legislator who ever attempted to enforce his laws by temporal sanctions involving

supernatural interpositions; and for this reason, that none but the true God could control the laws of nature, and execute such promises and threatenings as those by which the Mosaic code was enforced. In this argument Warburton rested much on the premise, that no future state of reward and punishment was taught in what he calls "the Mosaic religion," or "Mosaic dispensation," by which he must be understood to mean at least, that the Mosaic code was in no respect enforced by such sanctions. He denies that Noses, or the people of Israel, disbelieved a future state. He admits that the Mosaic dispensation, as a typical system, taught the doctrine of a future state, and that many passages in the Old Testament, in their typical sense, teach the same doctrine. What he seems to mean and maintain is simply, that the Mosaic dispensation, as such, does not, in literal language, or in the primary meaning of its language, teach the doctrine of future rewards and punishments; nor of course, make any use of this doctrine in enforcing obedience to its laws. What is true in this respect we may see hereafter. I only remark now, that the argument of Warburton for the divine legation of Moses must be admitted to be conclusive, whether we suppose the doctrine of a future state to be revealed and known or not; for if the laws given to Israel were enforced by constant supernatural interposition of God, the divine mission of their lawgiver was established.

Various opinions have been entertained in respect to the nature and design of the Mosaic dispensation. Some have maintained, that the laws of Moses respected only the external conduct or overt doings of men, because, like civil laws in modern times, they were enforced only by temporal sanctions, and in their administration made external conduct the criterion of obedience or disobedience, as if because such conduct under civil law is the proof, it is therefore the whole constituting element of loyalty or disloyalty. Others seem to deny or overlook the peculiar character or nature of this government as a theocracy, and to contemplate it only as a religious system which exhibits God solely as the moral governor of men. Others speak of it as requiring obedience, in the most unqualified manner, to all its precepts, under the penalty of death, and allowing no merely to any sinner, however penitent. Others still have considered the Mosaic law as a system by which Church and State were united -- a union of which I am not so fortunate as to have seen any

satisfactory explanation by those who maintain it.

Indeed, I must confess myself by no means satisfied with any view or explanation of the Mosaic law which I have seen. Even Jahn, one of the latest and best writers on the subject, appears to me to have overlooked entirely that material characteristic of the system, to which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has given the most prominence -- its characteristic as a representative system. The grand error of commentators -- of all who have attempted to unfold the nature of the system -- has been, as it seems to me, one of the following: either that they have regarded it as so exclusively a religious or moral polity -- what I have termed God's moral government over men as moral beings, as to overlook, and virtually deny, its primary, essential, and in one sense, its only character, that of a merely national institution; or, that they have regarded it -- I do not say as exclusively a civil institution, for such I think, in one use of language, it is and is properly said to be, but that as such, it neither furnished nor was designed to furnish, any important instruction respecting God's higher system of moral government over men as moral and immortal beings; or, that they have regarded it as so combining the two systems -- so uniting Church and State -- under one system, that it is impossible, even for practical purposes, to trace a clear distinction between them. On this subject there is an ambiguity of language which also deserves notice. In speaking as modern writers do of this system, as a national or civil institution of government, their language naturally leads the reader to understand that it does not in its nature include a representative system. But to speak of a national system of government, in that age of the world, when every such system was a theocracy, was to speak of a national system which, in its essential nature, was a representative system. To omit therefore, this idea or conception of a theocracy, by using the language described, is to give an essentially imperfect and false view of the thing in one of its most important relations.

Jahn, in his able treatise on this subject, appears to me to have misled himself by this unauthorized use of language; and in some instance, to have fallen into the second, and in others into the third, of the errors

above specified. Certainly, I cannot discover that he ever exhibits a theocracy, or the Jewish theocracy, as a representative system. Without this view of this theocracy, or with either of the views of it above specified, it is not strange, I think, that very imperfect and erroneous views should be formed of the reasons, the nature, the design of this amazing economy.

The proposition on this important part of the subject, which, with requisite explanations, I shall attempt to establish, is, that the Mosaic law or system of government was a theocracy, and as such, designed to exhibit God's moral government over men as moral beings under an economy of grace.

I propose to show --

I. What a theocracy is;

II. That the Mosaic law was a theocracy; and,

III. That it was designed to exhibit God's moral government over men as moral beings under an economy of grace. I inquire, then --

I. What is a theocracy?

That we may the better understand the nature of this kind of government, it is necessary to recur to the actual state of the world, and to the prevailing views of civil government, especially in Egypt, when Israel was called out of that country, to be organized as a distinct and peculiar nation under the superintendence and government of the true God.

The following facts demand particular consideration:

1. The notion of tutelary deities -- which has been supposed to be originally Egyptian -- was universal throughout the Gentile world.

This notion was, that the earth was divided by its Creator among a number of subordinate deities, each of which was employed in the protection and care of his own country and people, and wholly unconcerned for every other.

2. On this universal belief of an idolatrous world, in Egypt and all other nations, was founded all civil government.

These ancient legislators adopted into their civil code, not only laws which were strictly municipal, or designed to regulate Civil Conduct, but laws requiring and regulating, so far as such laws can control, the worship and service of their national gods, always claiming that they imposed their laws by the authority and sanctions of some divinity. And so, it may be said, the people believed.

3. All these were civil laws, or laws of the civil magistrate, having divine authority, whether they respected the worship of their national divinity or other conduct.

They were enforced by temporal sanctions, and the belief was as absolute as it was universal among the nations, that as they obeyed or disobeyed these laws of kings and rulers, they should receive both as individuals, good or evil from the hands of the civil magistrate, and also as nations, blessing or cursing from their tutelary deities, in the present world. Thus temporal good and evil, as dispensed in these modes, became exclusively and directly the sanctions of civil government in Egypt and in other nations -- sanctions of sure execution, in the popular belief, except arrested, in case of disobedience, by such rites of sacrifice and lustration as were ordained for propitiating their offended deities.

4. Every such national institution involved another characteristic or relation: it was regarded as a representative system.

By this I mean that the theocracy, or national system which, as such, respected the conduct and condition of men, as beings of earth and time, implied another and a higher system of government over them as moral and immortal beings, so that the latter was represented by and inferred from the former. The theocracy, as I understand it, was in every respect a merely national system, though of that peculiar kind in which God, or the divinity of the nation, was both national king and tutelary deity, and which also implied and represented a higher system of government in relation to a future state of existence.

The popular belief in this other and higher system, and its intimate connection with the theocratic government, seems to me, as a general fact or truth, to be placed beyond all reasonable doubt by Bishop Warburton in his Divine Legation of Moses, and also by other writers. I say as a general fact or truth, for I by no means commit myself to the defense of all the details of Warburton on the subject. Assuming their, as I think I may now safely assume, that the national government of Egypt, during the bondage of Israel in that country, was a theocracy and, as such, a merely civil or national institution as we have described it, we may now see that it would naturally, and did in fact in the view of the nation, become a representative system, implying another and a higher system of government over men, as moral and immortal beings; so that the latter was inferred from, and represented by the former. Let us look at the nature and circumstances of the case.

This form of civil government -- for as a theocracy it was simply such -- though wholly of human origin in fact, was founded, in its earlier forms at least, wholly in the pretense of divine revelation and divine authority. The ancient kings and legislators pretended, and secured the admission of the pretense, that they were commissioned by some god, by whose authority and direction they imposed their laws on the nations. The

design of this claim to a divine mission and to divine authority, was of course, to establish their control, and to perpetuate their power and their institutions. The more effectually to accomplish this, they availed themselves of the false religious systems of their people, especially the doctrine of tutelary deities, who, it was believed, exercised a particular providence over the affairs of men, and would bless with prosperity or curse with calamity, the nation over which they presided, as they should obey or disobey the laws of the civil ruler. Hence these rulers artfully employed these quasi religious opinions of the people, and especially encouraged their mysteries or rites of worship, that they might increase their veneration for these tutelary gods. This was done that so they might establish and render effective, the popular belief of the superintendence of these gods over the affairs of men in this world, by giving full force to the divine but temporal sanctions of civil government and its laws. Accordingly, the belief, as we have before said, was as absolute as it was universal among the nations, that as they obeyed or disobeyed the laws of kings and rulers, they obeyed or disobeyed their gods, and should receive at their hands as tutelary deities, both as nations and individuals, good or evil, blessing or cursing, in the present world. Thus temporal good and evil, as dispensed by the providence of the national gods, and by their authority through the hands of the civil magistrate, were the sanctions, the only proper legal sanctions, of a theocracy or national government in Egypt and in other nations.

But this is not all. Equally universal was the belief of a future state of rewards and punishments. Nor did the ingenuity prompted by the love of power fail to employ this belief for the purpose of enforcing submission to the authority, and obedience to the laws of civil government. This belief, however, was not inculcated or adopted, under the assumption that eternal sanctions were a part of the theocracy or national government; for this was not a government directly instituted and administered by the gods, without the intervention of men as civil rulers. It was administered in its ordinary course by men, who, according to the popular belief, were directed by divine inspiration; and so far as sanctioned by the providence of the gods, it was sanctioned only by means of. temporal good and evil.

But then this belief of a future state of rewards and punishments involved the belief of a great and momentous fact inseparable from it -- the belief of another and higher system of government than a national theocracy -- a government which, in its origin, authority and administration, would be regarded as directly and exclusively in the hands of the national divinity, whether of one supreme god or of many gods. This would be naturally regarded as a moral, as distinguished from a civil, government, and as determining the allotments of men in a future state of existence, when they had passed beyond the reach and control of earthly rulers, and all that could be called civil government. It would necessarily be regarded as a government, with its law as a rule of action and of judgment, and with its final issues in happiness and misery, as suited to an untried state of existence, and as exclusively in the hands of the national divinity. It would also involve other and higher relations on the part of men while living and acting in this world, than those of the subjects of a merely civil and temporal institution, for it would hold them responsible in respect to the higher rewards and punishments of an eternal retribution. As instituted and administered by the national divinity, it would naturally and surely be regarded as having a strong resemblance, in certain great principles and modes of administration, to that which the same being had established and administered over them as their tutelary deity. The administration of some of the laws of a theocracy would necessarily be confined to the civil magistracy. This part of the theocracy, consisting of these laws, some of them perhaps, admitting of satisfaction for their violation by offerings and sacrifices, and others not, would not naturally, being thus exclusively in the hands of men with the errors and imperfections of its administration, be supposed to bear an exact or even a striking resemblance to the higher system. It would be far more natural and reasonable to infer a resemblance between that part of the theocracy whose administration, in respect to sanctions, was reserved in the hands of the tutelary god or gods, according to the promises and the threatenings which were to be executed by an extraordinary providence. This, I cannot but think, would be the most natural view of the subject, though we may not be warranted by the records of antiquity to say that it was actually taken. But that the theocracy, or lower system -- so far as its administration was viewed as in the hands of the tutelary divinity, and as involving an extraordinary providence, whether it respected individuals or the nation generally -- would be considered as resembling, and so representing, the higher system in its general nature and great principles, cannot, I think, be

reasonably doubted. It is true indeed, that from the essential differences in the nature of the two systems as pertaining to different states of existence, would obviously, in the view of all, naturally arise differences in their administration. But how could it be supposed, that the same Divine Being who reigned supreme in both systems, should prescribe a rule of action requiring less or more in either, than the spirit of loyalty due to a divine being? The natural conclusion would be, that this rule of action, though sustained in the one system by temporal, and in the other by eternal sanctions, would be the same in both, and especially if it were absolutely perfect in the lower, would not be less than absolutely perfect in the higher system. Further, if the lower system assumed, and proceeded on the assumption, that this perfect rule of action was universally transgressed, this would be unavoidably implied in respect to the rule of the higher system. If this perfect rule of action was modified as a rule of judgment under the theocracy, by an economy of grace and forgiveness in respect to penitent transgressors, through propitiatory sacrifices, how could it be supposed that less benignity would characterize the government of the same being, under the higher system, in forgiving transgression through some adequate propitiation. Under both systems, the perfection of the law as a rule of action could scarcely fail so far to convict the human conscience of sin, as to render welcome the doctrine of forgiveness by sacrifice, and to secure the belief of it, especially as sedulously inculcated by kings, hierophants, &c., in the mysteries and rites of national worship. It is true, that the mode of determining who is obedient and who disobedient to the rule of judgment, would widely differ under the two systems. In one it would be only through the medium of external action; in the other, by the direct inspection of the heart by an omniscient judge. In neither would the claim for the true principle and spirit of loyalty to the reigning divinity be dispensed with as a matter of obligation. In each system, as a system of law and grace, the rule of duty, as prescribing the whole duty of the subject, would differ from the rule of judgment as prescribing the condition of acceptance and favor. While the rule of duty in each system must be the same, and the rule of judgment in each the same, yet, in the lower or national system, external action, though not full compliance with the rule of judgment as being merely external action, must be the evidence or proof, and therefore the criterion of such compliance. But in the higher system, not external action but the direct inspection of the heart, would determine the question of compliance with the rule of

judgment. Hence they who were judged obedient to the national system according to the rule of judgment under it as a system of grace, would, if actually obedient to this rule, be rewarded under the higher system; or if judged disobedient to the national system, according to the rule and mode of judgment under it, would, if actually disobedient to this rule, be punished under the higher system. Thus, a higher influence than any furnished by the theocracy, or merely national government, with its temporal sanctions, and its mode of adjudication, was employed, not as a part of the national government as such, but still as tending to secure obedience to the national government. It was the influence of the authority of Him who was their national god, but not as their national king, reigning over them as beings of earth and time, but as their moral governor, reigning over them as moral and immortal beings. The two relations of national king and moral governor were combined in one being. The authority was one and the same in both. It was divine. It was as if God should become the national king of this State, and thus impart his authority to our particular form of government and each particular law of this government. This would not confound, but present in perfect distinctness, the two great relations of national ruler and moral governor. his assumption of the former would not in the slightest degree obscure the latter, especially if we suppose him to give us a national system of government, resembling in its more prominent and substantial characteristics his moral system. We should still distinguish the one from the other as clearly as the Saviour did, when he said, "Fear not them which kill the body," &c.; or, again, "Render to Ceasar the things," &c.; or as the apostle, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man," &c. In like manner, if we suppose ourselves in the condition of the heathen nations, without the knowledge of God by revelation, and yet believing in a supreme divinity as a national god and tutelary deity, and at the same time believing in a future state in which this being would dispense future rewards and punishments, it would be natural -- it would be reasonable to believe -- it would be nearly incredible that we should not believe, in a higher system of government than the theocracy, while the latter should represent, and satisfactorily illustrate, the nature and great principles of the former. So in the case of a heathen theocracy, the resemblance being rationally assumed, so far as the nature of the two systems would admit, the lower system, in its essential nature and substantial principles, being constantly acted upon and familiarly known -- being regarded as a revelation from the supreme divinity and having his high sanction; how

can it be doubted that a theocracy, though as such a mere national system would be, and was regarded by its subjects, in all supposable and substantial respects, as implying, proving, and representing a higher system of moral government, whose judgments and retributions were to follow when the soul left the body; in a word, that a theocracy, though simply a national system administered over men as beings of earth and time, was a representative system also, exhibiting a moral system as administered over men as moral and immortal beings?

A theocracy then, may be said to be the civil government of a nation or people in which the supreme divinity, whether one god or many gods, assumes the two relations of national king and national god or tutelary deity, and administers by his extraordinary providence, their entire civil polity under a system of grace; thus exhibiting, by inference and representation, his higher system of moral government over them as moral and immortal beings.

LECTURE III: THE MOSAIC LAW A THEOCRACY.

Plan of argument -- Certain characteristics of the system are undeniable, viz., the Mosaic system reveals God as national king and tutelary deity. -- All its laws are from God. -- It was administered to some extent by a human magistracy, as well as by an extraordinary providence. -- It involved political propitiatory rites, &c. -- It was sustained expressly only by temporal sanctions. -- Exterior action is the criterion but not the rule of judgment. -- That it was a theocracy evident from its religious services; also from its direct or primary design. -- It was a positive, as distinguished from a moral institution. -- It was a civil government, administered by God, as distinguished from a civil government, administered by man. -- Its late beginning and transient continuance.

HAVING attempted to show what a theocracy is, I now proceed to show -
-

II. That the Mosaic law was a theocracy, i.e., that the government of Israel by Moses was one in which God assumed the two relations of national king and tutelary deity toward that nation, and by the civil magistrate, and also by an extraordinary providence, administered their entire civil polity, through propitiatory rites, under an economy of grace; thus exhibiting, in a natural and representative method, his higher system of moral government over them, and over all men, as moral and immortal beings.

Before I proceed directly to offer the proof of this proposition, I remark, that there is one great and prominent fact, and a principle resulting from it, which are ever to be remembered in all our reasonings on this subject. The fact is, that the Israelites when delivered from Egypt, and when receiving the law from Moses, were thoroughly Egyptian in their character, education, language, modes of thought, opinions, habits, and usages. The principle resulting from this fact is, that the true God, in

revealing himself to this people in the two great relations of their king and their God, would and ought to be understood, and would intend to be understood, in the true Egyptian meaning of the language employed in this revelation of himself. Especially are these things so, provided that there is no evidence to the contrary, and that every consideration supposable in the case to confirm this meaning of the language, actually exists. Assuming then, what I claim to have decisively proved, that the government of Egypt was a theocracy, and that the Israelites when brought out of Egypt could have had no idea or conception of any other government than that of a theocracy, it follows, according to the principle above stated, that the government which God. by Moses instituted over Israel, in the only authorized and just view of it, must have been regarded by that people as a theocracy, and therefore was a theocracy.

I shall now attempt to establish the truth of my leading proposition, by considerations which not only prove its truth, but which will more fully unfold the nature of the Mosaic system, than could well be done in a somewhat general definition. These considerations will be derived --

In the first place, from some prominent and undeniable characteristics of the Mosaic law as given to Israel.

In the second place, from the character, views, opinions, &c., of the Israelites, as wholly Egyptian, when they received the law.

In the third place, from a common use of language in the early ages of the world, in which one thing is spoken of chiefly to denote another.

In the fourth place, from the New Testament.

That the Mosaic law was a theocracy is evident --

I. From some obvious and undeniable characteristics of the law as given to Israel.

That the government of this people was, in some general and essential respects, a theocracy, according to the view now taken of such a government, I suppose will, to a great extent, be admitted. I suppose that it will be admitted --

First, that God assumed toward this people the two great relations of national king and tutelary deity.

Secondly, that the whole Mosaic system -- all its laws -- emanated from God, and were clothed with his authority.

Thirdly, that this government, while administered to some extent by a human magistracy of divine institution, was also administered by an extraordinary providence.

Fourthly, that it involved through propitiatory rites and sacrifices suited to its nature, a system of grace in the forgiveness of civil or political transgression.

These essential characteristics of a theocracy in the government of Israel, I suppose to be too obvious to require proof.

There are yet others which may be more questionable. I remark therefore --

Fifthly, that this government over Israel was directly sustained and

enforced by no other than temporal sanctions.

Here the question is not, whether a future state of rewards and punishments is revealed in the Old Testament. What is now maintained is, that the Mosaic law or Jewish theocracy, was enforced only by temporal sanctions. For proof of this, I deem it sufficient to refer only to the 27th, 28th, and 29th chapters of Deuteronomy. In the 27th, the Jewish lawgiver directs the manner in which the curses of the law shall be published to all the people and assented to by them. In the 28th, we have a full and unambiguous description of these curses, and of the opposite blessings. Both are exclusively of a temporal nature. Nor could the language have been more explicit to this purpose, according to ordinary usage, had there been no future state. In the 29th chapter, it appears that the threatened evils were not exclusively national, or such as could be inflicted on the whole nation, but that the individual who violated the law became liable to similar punishments. Vide verses 19, 20, and Heb. ii. 2.

Sixthly. I allege that external or overt action, though not the rule, is the only criterion of judgment in the administration of the law of the theocracy. God, in assuming the relation of national king toward Israel, and giving them law, never lowered or obscured the standard of right moral action, but required them to love him with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength, the only spirit of loyalty due to a Being of infinite perfection. As tried by this perfect rule of action, he ever assumed, and proceeded on the assumption, that all were sinners or transgressors, and as such must be condemned or cursed. Deut. xxvii. 26, and Gal. iii. 10. The light of truth shone so strongly on this fact, that the people, at least the candid and enlightened, fully conceded it by their frequent and formal confessions. Their offerings and sacrifices, voluntary and commanded, proved the same thing. And especially did the great sacrifice, made once a year for the sins of all the people, show that all were transgressors of that perfect rule of action which was common to both the national and the moral government of God, and that God never relinquished the prerogative of searching the heart and trying the reins. And yet the omniscience of God, as the national sovereign, never interposed in the administration of the national law, or theocracy. The laws of this system, as such, like other national laws, were designed to secure that spirit of

loyalty due to the national king, and thus to secure such overt action as would promote, and to prevent such as would hinder, the well-being of the State, as a temporal or earthly community. It was also designed to secure those outward forms of worship, which were appointed to produce an almost constant recognition of the only living and true God as the tutelary deity of the nation, and thus strongly to impress on them their dependence on him for their national prosperity. This was the direct design of those civil laws in which their burdensome ritual was enacted and enforced.

And here, that we may not confound, as is too often done, the two co-existing kinds of government -- the national government of God over this people, as citizens of the State, and his moral government over them and all other men, as moral beings -- it becomes important to show wherein these two kinds of government, in the present case, agree, and wherein they differ.

The law of requirement then, that is, the substantial rule of action, is necessarily the same in both the moral and the national system. This results from the fact, that the same perfect Being is the supreme sovereign and lawgiver in both, and therefore, in the form of a rule of action, could require in both nothing less than that spirit of loyalty which is due to his perfect character, with all its specific expressions in subordinate action demanded by circumstances. Thus God, in this law or rule of action required every Israelite as a subject of his national government, in every act whether of worship, or other overt service or conduct, to love him with all his heart, and with all his soul, not less than as a subject of his moral government. Every Israelite, viewed in relation to either government, was under this perfect rule of action for all moral beings, and if tried and judged by this perfect rule of action, must be convicted of not having observed all the words of this law to do them, and by it must therefore be condemned. But none but the Omniscient King could justly judge the people according to this perfect rule of action; nor he, without making the law of his moral government both a rule of action and a rule of judgment. Had he done this, the national government would have terminated at once, as it were, in the eternal retribution of its

subjects as moral beings. Besides, that this perfect rule of action is not the rule of judgment in either system is evident, since each system, instead of being administered on strictly legal principles, is combined with and modified by an economy of grace, providing mercy and forgiveness on condition of repentance. Hence, legal sanctions are not adjudged or executed under either system according to the perfect rule of action under each, but under each according to a rule of judgment instituted and modified by grace. This rule of judgment also is and must be the same under both systems. From the character of the lawgiver, this must require, some degree of personal holiness as the condition of acceptance; nothing being more incongruous and unsupposable, than that such a lawgiver and judge should, even under a gracious economy, lower the condition of the slightest favor to entire impenitence and unbelief, i.e., to the utter want of personal holiness. This would be a formal exemption of the impenitent from punishment, and an avowed relinquishment of all claim to the lowest degree of that spirit of loyalty which is due to such a lawgiver. The rule of judgment then, so far as made known by the language of the lawgiver -- so far as clear promulgation, or precise specification in terms can determine it, is the same under both systems.

It requires, in formal and explicit specification, REPENTANCE, i.e., some degree of personal holiness. No subject, as related to either system, however according to some other principles he may be treated, has any warrant to conclude or suppose that he is truly accepted, or regarded with actual favor, by the lawgiver, any further than he is truly penitent in his sight. The lawgiver has said nothing, done nothing, to authorize on this point any other conclusion.

But we now come to a difficulty, or at least, what is very commonly supposed to be a difficulty -- one which, if I mistake not, has occasioned very unsatisfactory exhibitions of the Jewish theocracy. This difficulty arises from overlooking the necessary principle in the administration of a national government, though it be a theocracy -- that of making overt or external action the criterion, but not the rule of judgment. This distinction between the rule and the criterion of judgment, though it seems not to be

at once obvious to every mind, is of vital importance. The necessity of adhering to this principle in the administration of all civil law, does in no respect change the rule of judgment, which requires in all cases, a true spirit of loyalty to the ruler, in the present case, to God, the national king of Israel. Adherence to this principle is only the necessary mode of determining the question of the spirit of loyalty, compliance or noncompliance with the actual rule of judgment. Instead of determining it by the direct inspection of Omniscience, the Omniscient National King himself conforms to this universal and necessary mode of determining conformity to the rule of judgment. Nor does he in this way in any degree obscure, or render doubtful to reason or common sense, the actual rule of judgment as requiring the loyalty of the heart. The subject tried and judged, even when accepted and rewarded on account of merely external action as the only criterion of his loyalty, still knows that he has not secured the favor of his Omniscient Sovereign, but only the external expression of his favor. Such hypocrisy is the subject's own fault, not that of the sovereign or the law. The rule of judgment is plain, and if the necessary criterion of judgment is, through the perversion of the subject, made the occasion of hypocrisy, still this criterion is the best which the nature of the case admits of, and the evils resulting from it are far less than would result from adopting any other. For, while a spirit of loyalty furnishes the best security that the ends of civil government, in overt action and its results will be obtained, and ought therefore to be required, still the well-being of the State is secured by that overt action which is the expression of this spirit. I add, that the administration of this system in adjudging and executing sanctions, was to a great extent, committed to rulers and judges with whom external action could, of course, be the only criterion of judgment. Accordingly, as in other cases of civil government, a rule of evidence was prescribed, and external action only made the proof of loyalty or disloyalty to the national king.

The same thing is substantially true in respect to that part of it which God reserved to himself, and administered by an extraordinary providence. God here proceeded as rigidly on the Principle of making overt action on the part of the nation and of individuals, the criterion of obedience and disobedience, and of conferring good and inflicting evil, as ever did any human magistrate. So far as subjects were externally obedient, they

were, according to the only possible mode of administering a civil government, adjudged and treated as in principle obedient to the rule of judgment; and so far as they were externally disobedient, they were adjudged and treated as in principle disobedient to the rule of judgment.

Thus God was pleased to give to his chosen people a political or civil government, and to proceed more humano in every part of its administration. Every step of his providence, in awarding temporal sanctions, and the mode of it, show that he disposed of their civil affairs only in accordance with the principles of civil government; and though he interfered by a supernatural providence, he did so only in conformity with these principles.

Seventhly. That the Mosaic system was a theocracy, is evident from those laws of the system which respected what are commonly called "the religious services" of the people. Most writers on this subject speak of the laws of this system as "political laws, requiring religious duties, rites, sacrifices, offerings and worship." Now I cannot but regard this not only as a false, but as a peculiarly unfortunate use of the word religious, as fitted to conceal the distinction between what was strictly and simply "political," and what was, in the lowest authorized sense, "religious." The error in my view, consists in overlooking the fact, that the twofold relation of national king and tutelary deity is merely apolitical relation -- the latter as truly as the former. It is true, as I have already said, that in every law of the theocracy, the requirement reached the heart. This is true in every instance of rightful civil or national government -- the specific nature of this spirit of loyalty being determined in each case by the character of the national king or ruler. Still, in each case it is a merely political requirement, as enacted by political authority and for political purposes. Obedience and disobedience to such a requirement are merely political obedience or political disobedience; and this, whether God or man be the national ruler, and whether the spirit of loyalty be due to the one or the other. The former indeed, contemplated under certain relations, would be a morally right or religious principle or state of mind. But it has also other relations which are by no means essential to it as a religious principle, and which result from it solely as commanded by, or as obedience to, civil

law. As such obedience, it secured by promise the favor of the tutelary deity, in long life and great temporal prosperity; while contemplated simply as religious principle, it had no such connection. To call any of the services, even the morally right principle, as claimed by the law of the theocracy or civil law, religious service or religious worship, or by any name when contemplated as obedience to civil law, which shall imply that it sustains any other or higher relations than those of mere civil obedience, is a false and unfortunate use of language. Even the word holy, when applied to this people, denoted nothing beyond obedience to civil law, and as such simply described it as related to the promises of the national system. From the mere word, no inference could be made of any higher relation of those to whom it was applied, than that of subjects of civil government, who evinced by external conduct a spirit of loyalty to their national king, and were thus entitled to the temporal blessings which he, as national God, had promised to such obedience. Thus it appears that God, as the national king and tutelary deity of Israel, in the administration of a theocracy over this people, and in its true and proper effects and consequences, no more held them responsible for religious service properly so called, or personal piety, or true spiritual religion in its higher relations to the allotments of men in a future state, than does any wise and good human ruler. It is true, that God, as a national ruler, in claiming of his subjects a spirit of loyalty, claimed more as his due, than any human ruler can properly claim as his due. Still, this spirit of loyalty to him as national ruler, no more sustained, as such, those relations which pertain to what is properly called religion, piety, spiritual holiness, than does the spirit of loyalty to a human magistrate sustain these relations. I am not saying that those services required by the theocracy, which are often called "religious," were not peculiar, and did not sustain a peculiar relation. They were peculiar, and yet common to every theocracy. Their relation was peculiar on account of the peculiar arbitrary relation of God, as the tutelary deity of the nation, dispensing by a supernatural providence, national blessings and national calamities. They were services rendered to him in view of his relation to them, and their consequent relation to him, in respect to these temporal blessings and evils, and not to him as their moral or spiritual ruler, nor as arising from their relation to him as moral or spiritual beings.

It will greatly confirm the views now given of the Mosaic law, to show in this place, how decisively they refute a common objection to it. It has often been said, that as a civil or national law, it punished its subjects for matters of opinion, and the instance especially appealed to, is that of the sincere idolater. This dishonorable imputation has been commonly countenanced by the advocates of its divine authority. It is now denied as entirely groundless. God as we have seen, could not, consistently with his own character, claim in the form of requirement any thing less of men than that truly spiritual state of the heart which is his due, and which of course implies a just conception of his character. But then we have seen, that this same state of mind as required by God as the moral governor of men, and as required by God as national king of citizens in their relation to the State, must sustain very different relations. Viewed as required by the moral governor, it is piety, spiritual religion, with its eternal relations. Viewed as required by the national king, it is simply political loyalty in temporal relations. The same things, *mutatis mutandis*, are true of the opposite act or state of mind. In its relation to God as national king, idolatry is not to be viewed as spiritual impiety, but only as a civil offense with its essential relations. As such, it was simply treason -- *crimen læsæ majestatis*. This relation was not destroyed or changed by any other relation to God's moral government, no more than the same political crime is with us. As a civil offense, it was therefore justly punishable by civil law. This is decisively confirmed by the fact, that God, as a civil though an omniscient lawgiver, never judged and determined any subject of this law, by the omniscient inspection of his heart, to be an idolater. The law was never applied to the internal belief, which was manifested by no overt act, and which of course, could not be tried before a civil tribunal. The secret idolater, believing and trusting in false gods, was indeed guilty of spiritual impiety; but no law of the theocracy could punish him for this. And further, in this same state of mind, he was in principle guilty of rebellion against the national king. But for this, so long as it was not manifested in overt action, no process of civil law could reach him. On the contrary, the civil law gave him full protection, until, by overt action, he showed his practical denial of the authority of the national king. It was then, in such a case, and for such a reason, and not for a matter of mere opinion, that he was to be punished as a political offender. A conscientious idolater -- if we suppose such an one -- could no more be punished for a mere matter of opinion under the Mosaic law, than could be a conscientious murderer or blasphemer, &c., and neither could be

punished for a matter of opinion, but only for action, which simply as a civil offense, showed him to be an enemy of the State.

Eighthly. I infer the same thing from the direct design of the Mosaic institution. By this institution God designed, primarily and directly, to reveal himself as the only living and true God, in the single relation of the national king and tutelary deity of Israel; though, as we may see hereafter, indirectly by this means, in the higher relation of moral governor. That such was the primary design of the theocracy is as obvious, as that the Mosaic system was a political or national system in every essential respect, or even in any respect at all. God's spiritual or moral government over men as spiritual, moral, and immortal beings, and a civil government even in his hands, are in their very nature, ends and modes of administration so essentially diverse, that they can not be identified, or made, to coalesce in one system of government. How for example, could a civil government as such, require personal religion, spiritual religion, piety, holiness, of its subjects in its true and essential nature and relations; or how be administered according to the direct inspection of the heart by omniscience; and how could the moral government of God require spiritual religion, except in its spiritual relations, or be administered in any other way than by the direct inspection of the heart? If these two kinds of government, though in the hands of the same Being, are, as we have seen they are, entirely distinct, then God, when revealing himself as the only living and true God, in the single relation of national ruler, does not, as identical with this relation, nor as any essential part of it, reveal his higher relation of the moral governor of men as moral and immortal beings. I am not saying that the latter relation may not be in some way inferred from or represented by the former. But I maintain that each is distinct from the other; that each is, complete in itself; that each might exist by itself without the other; and that therefore two things, so different and distinct, cannot be so combined as to lose their distinct and separate nature and identity. God then, in revealing himself to Israel as the only living and true God in the comprehensive relation of national king and tutelary deity, did not in so doing directly reveal himself in the higher relation of the moral governor of men, but only as the one true God in the former relation. The Mosaic institution therefore, was simply a national or civil institution. All its

relations were civil, temporal relations. Even the requirements, which were the same as those of God's moral government, and when viewed as elements or parts of it, were spiritual and holy, in the highest sense, yet as elements or parts of the Mosaic system, sustained only civil and temporal relations. The Mosaic institution therefore, was primarily and directly designed to reveal God to Israel in the single relation of national God and tutelary deity; and was of course in its only true and essential nature, a national or civil institution of that peculiar kind called a theocracy.

It may serve to illustrate and confirm the foregoing view of the subject to remark, that, when in common language, we speak of what a thing is, we speak, at least for the most part, not of its absolute, but of its relative nature. Thus we say of a stone, it is heavy; meaning its relative nature, or its absolute nature as related to the earth, and within the sphere of its attraction. But the same stone with its absolute nature unchanged, were it to be removed at a certain distance from the earth, and placed within the sun's attraction, would cease to be heavy, in this new condition of existence. All such terms as right, good, bad, holy, righteous, &c., and such also as bard, Aft, heavy, &c., are relative terms. Thus, when we speak of action as holy in its highest or spiritual sense, we mean its relative nature; i.e., its nature as related to the highest interests of moral beings. Viewed however, in its nature in relation to the State, or to the well-being of the body politic, especially in its relative nature in the Hebrew commonwealth under its theocracy, it has another relative nature than its relative nature in the highest sense. This relative nature of such action, so peculiar, and arising exclusively from the relation of this people to God as their national king and tutelary deity, in Hebrew usage was called holy. Thus the same action is properly conceived and spoken of as holy, in the highest sense, without including in it the conception of its political relation under the Hebrew theocracy; and also as holy denoting its political relations, without including the conception of its holy nature in the highest sense. This shows how entirely distinct, in the true conception of things, was the civil government which God administered over Israel as a State, from the moral government which he administered over them as moral and immortal beings; and how it is that the former could wholly cease, and the latter remain immutable and eternal.

Ninthly. I infer the same thing, from the nature of the Mosaic system, as a circumstantial or positive, in distinction from a moral institution. In the use of these terms however, I must briefly explain my meaning. By a moral institution or government of God over men, I mean that which necessarily results from the essential nature and essential condition or circumstances of men as moral beings. This essential nature and there essential circumstances are absolutely unchangeable so long as men are moral beings; nor can the moral government of God over such beings cease for a moment, let circumstances change as they may. By a circumstantial or positive institution of God over men, I mean one which arises from and depends on other things or circumstances than those which are essential to their high relation as moral beings; that is, on circumstances which are changeable and often change. It is appointed by a perfect God in one set of variable circumstances, and not in another, because the circumstances in which it is ordained furnish the reason for its appointment or ordination. It is indeed, authoritative and binding in all circumstances in which it is ordained, for it is ordained only in those variable circumstances, which are the reasons for investing it with the authority and obligation of a divine command; all which is proved to its subjects by the character and promulgated will of its author. It is therefore changeable and changes, as certain variable circumstances of moral beings change, while moral government over moral beings is unchangeable, so long as they are moral beings. A theocracy therefore is not immutable as is moral government, but is in an important respect circumstantial, arbitrary, or positive. It is circumstantial, as its establishment depends on the variable circumstances of moral beings; and it is arbitrary or positive, as its universal obligation and authority are wholly determined by a formal positive enactment of unexplained sovereignty. Its whole nature as a civil law or institution, is an arbitrary nature -- a nature which so entirely depends on the will of God, that he can create or annul it and its obligation, by imparting to it, or withholding from it, civil relations at his pleasure, without changing its nature, relations, or obligation, as a moral law or institution. It is thus, I may say, that the apostle has described the whole Mosaic institution in Eph. ii. 15, and in Col. ii. 14. This will appear hereafter, from his use of the word _____, of which the plural form used by him cannot, I think, be better rendered than by positive institutions as now explained.

Such, beyond all denial, was the Mosaic law -- the theocracy of Israel. It resulted wholly from the peculiar circumstances of this people. It was a law or system to them which in some sense it was not to any other. Without specifying these circumstances in detail, it is sufficient to say, that God had made peculiar promises to their fathers concerning these their descendants -- the promise of great temporal prosperity the promise that the knowledge of himself should not be utterly lost in the world by the encroachments of idolatry; that through them it should be imparted to other nations, and that from them the seed of Abraham, should the Redeemer come, to the end that these promises so peculiar might be fulfilled, and this peculiar and high destination of this people accomplished; a theocracy -- a civil government, clothed with God's authority -- became, from the condition of circumstances of this people in Egypt, so far as man can see, the fittest means, that by connecting the knowledge of the true God thus intimately, even essentially with their civil government and their existence as a nation, the former could not be annihilated without the annihilation of the latter. Such a government, in its general nature and form, was in accordance with the civil government of other nations, and peculiarly adapted to the peculiar circumstances and usages of those over whom it was established. How plainly then, was it what I have called it, a circumstantial, or, better, a positive institution? How plainly incredible that God, in becoming a civil ruler -- a political king of one nation, or of all nations -- should so lower the two great spiritual requirements of his moral government -- the one the perfect rule of action, and the other the actual rule of judgment to men (as moral and immortal beings), that these rules or laws should sustain simply the relation of civil laws, awarding only temporal rewards and punishments through external action as the sole criterion of adjudication, except this government was merely a circumstantial institution.

Tenthly. The same view of the Mosaic law will be corroborated, if we consider the difference between a civil government administered by God, and civil government administered by man. Of all civil government, the true object or end is to secure by the influence of its authority, the highest well-being of the State as a community of earth and time. This authority, of the civil governor, or the civil authority which is to be employed for the

temporal well-being of the State, though always absolute while acknowledged by its subject, is to be estimated and measured in its degree by the degree of the governors qualification to rule, i.e., by his competence and disposition to govern in the best manner. At the same time, the spirit of loyalty on the part of subjects, founded in a due regard for the well-being of the State, as a temporal community, is to be graduated by the known qualifications of the governor for his office, supposing him always to possess the degree of qualification which justly entitles him to reign. Thus his authority and their loyalty would properly vary in degree, as the governor might be a superior man or a higher being, as an angel. Still, his authority would be merely civil authority, i.e., merely a right to govern according to the principles of such a jurisdiction; or, in general, to enact and enforce law for the temporal well-being of the State. He has and can have no right to enact laws designed to control or to secure the spiritual well-being as such of his subjects, or to regulate or determine the religious faith or opinions as such of his subjects, either Pagan or Mohammedan, Infidel, Jewish or Christian, Protestant or Catholic. Such prerogative pertains to no civil ruler, whether man or angel; nor so far as we can say, to God himself under this relation. If God, as the national king of Israel, may be said in claiming the spirit of loyalty due to himself, so far virtually to claim a right religious belief, still he never assumed the prerogative of enforcing either claim by temporal rewards and penalties. It was not disobedience to either claim as such, or as seen and known by his omniscient eye but it was such disobedience, only as evinced by overt action, for which he inflicted or ever threatened to inflict, the pains and penalties of the national law. If then, we suppose God himself to assume the relation of a civil governor of a State, taking the whole civil authority which had before existed in the hands of men into his own, he would indeed possess a higher degree of civil authority than his predecessor; and the spirit of loyalty due on the part of subjects to their king or civil governor, ought to be that which is fitted to his infinitely perfect character, and perfect qualification to govern the State in the best manner. Still, the civil authority which he has assumed, and had a right to assume, though taken from the hands of another, is in its essential nature and relations civil authority, and it is nothing more. He was the perfect moral governor of men before assuming the relation and prerogatives of a civil ruler over the State.

Civil government then, as a kind of government, is one and the same thing (though differing circumstantially in the degree of its authority in different cases), whether in the hands of man, or of an angel, or of an archangel, or of God. It is, at the same time, so diverse as a kind of government from that higher kind of government which God administers over men, as moral beings, in their high relation to eternity, that, while they are easily confounded, they should be accurately distinguished according to their essential difference. Thus distinguished, what can be more rationally believed, than that God, the rightful moral sovereign of all men as moral beings, should, in view of the condition of this lost world -- in view of his relation to Abraham, and of the condition of his descendants in Egypt, and especially for the great purpose of accomplishing his highest design and richest promise of mercy to our sinful race -- assume the relation of a national king and tutelary deity over the people of Israel -- hold and perpetuate, for long centuries, the administration of this national or civil system of government over that people in his own hands -- keep the entire administrations of the two systems wholly distinct -- render the inferior system ever prominent and subservient as a temporary representation of the higher, until its object and end should be fully accomplished in the advent of the Great Redeemer of all -- then entirely abolish the inferior system, so leaving all civil authority and power to revert to human hands, and all this as an overwhelming and everlasting confirmation of the higher system, so worthy of himself, as one to be consummated in the issues of eternity?

To a clear apprehension of the subject before us, there is yet in some minds perhaps, a difficulty which it is desirable to remove. Thus it may be inquired -- since the authority of God as the moral governor of men as moral beings, remains unimpaired over them, and especially since the apostles Paul and Peter (Rom. xiii. 1, &c., and 1 Pet. ii. 13) so expressly and earnestly enjoin submission to existing civil government as the ordinance of God and for conscience' sake -- how is it, that every civil government is not clothed with divine authority; or, that the authority of God as a moral governor does not, in its own proper influence, directly reach the duties and conduct of men, as citizens or members of the State, and bind them to obey the enactments of civil government? I answer, that a true rendering of the passages referred to, instead of one

dictated by the assumed doctrine of the divine right of kings, will correct some common mistakes of commentators, and show what is the meaning of these apostles. I remark then, that nothing is plainer in these passages, than their distinct recognition of the difference between God's authority as a moral governor over men as moral beings, and the authority of civil government over men as its subjects; for both apostles simply employ one kind of authority, viz., God's authority as a moral governor to enforce submission to another kind of authority, viz., man's authority as a civil ruler. When or where had these governments of the nations derived their authority from God, as had the national government of Israel? Or how, in any way, came they to possess this divine authority? We know the method and the means by which the civil government of Israel was clothed with God's authority. He assumed every prerogative of an absolute national king over this people. He became their legislator, enacting with his own authority their every law. Nor was there the shadow of any other civil authority than his own, or that which was directly and expressly derived from it, in the entire administration of their national system. When has he done this for any other nation? Now the apostle Paul speaks of "the powers (_____, authorities) that be; which of course, are not mere abstractions. He speaks not of civil government in the abstract but of civil authorities or governments actually existing, which they to whom he wrote knew, and which we know, were as exclusively of human origin as is the authority of a city or of a school. This is placed beyond all denial by the passage in I Pet. ii. 13, where the apostle says, "Submit yourselves to _____, every human creation, for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors as unto them as sent by him," &c. What can be more plainly taught, than that the authority of civil government is simply human authority, and has solely a human origin? Thus while both these apostles represent every civil government in its essential, inherent authority, as a merely human institution, and do not weaken this authority, or the obligation of the subjects arising from it, they lay upon them in addition to this, another and higher authority, even God's authority over them as moral beings, to submit to this civil human authority, whenever or wherever it exists.

To confirm this view of the subject and to remove any doubts arising from

the common translation, and the more common interpretation of the passages referred to, I shall, as briefly as may be, further present my own views of the meaning of these apostles, in the context. Paul then, plainly asserts, that there is no instance of the existing power or authority, of which he speaks, which is not generally speaking from God'; and then, to show his more particular meaning, adds: These existing powers (_____), authorities of human origin, are ordered (_____) not by revelation, but ordered, appointed, in his providential, purposes -- arranged in his providence, and designed to be in each case the existing thing which it is, neither more nor less -- a human institution with its own peculiar human authority, obviously fitted while existing as such, and shown to human reason, by the nature and condition of human society, to be fitted to promote the well-being of the State, and indirectly the highest good of the universe, and thus to swell the sum total of good. They are like many other human institutions, originated, devised, and adopted by men, as obviously dictated by human reason, as parts of the providential arrangement (_____, v. 2.) of God, for the well-being of men on earth: for example, as parental government in the family, that of tutors and governors in colleges, schools, &c. The parent and the schoolmaster are each bound, or under obligation to God to assume authority, to devise and administer government in their respective relations in view of its necessary utility to the family and the school. But they are under this obligation to God not as a national king or ruler, but as the moral governor of men as moral beings. The Jews entertained the false and almost invincible prejudice, that human authority was no authority, and that no national government had the least authority whatever, except God's express and direct authority as given to it, and assumed on his part by formal revelation enacting its laws, &c. Accordingly, the apostles are at great pains to show the contrary. They not only distinctly and expressly recognize the authority of every existing civil government, as originated by man (_____), but inculcate submission to this simply human authority by a still higher authority. Thus Paul: Whosoever resisteth (_____, arrays himself against) this human authority of an existing civil government a providential arrangement of God, or an establishment of God brought into existence by his providence resisteth in so doing, what? Not an ordinance of God clothed with his authority as a national ruler, by express revelation as in the case of the Jews; nor yet even as that which in this manner he had required men themselves to

establish, or, in respect to the form of it, given the least direction or instruction; but a merely human institution brought, under God's providential ordering of human agencies and instrumentalities, into existence by men for the temporal well-being of States or nations. By resisting any such human institution, man could not resist what is properly called a divine ordinance, involving the universal divine right of kings, the most foreign and even contemptible idea to a Jewish mind as applied to the kings of the Gentiles, but a merely human institution (_____), purposed, and brought to pass, in the providence of God, for the temporal well-being of the State. He therefore, who should resist, overthrow or destroy in any case, such a means of good, or any other means of good so important, so useful and even necessary to men as social beings here on earth, acts wickedly as a moral being: instead of doing good from right moral principle, he does evil from wrong moral principle. To show this, if possible still more plainly, the apostle says (v. 5): "There is a necessity that you should be subject, not only to avoid the penalty of the civil institution, by which only its authority can be supported when resisted, but also for another and far higher reason -- on account of conscience, which will condemn you for acting morally wrong, as moral beings, in contravening the will of God as the moral governor of men, though this will is shown, not by revelation but by the utility of civil government." He then proceeds to inculcate, FOR THE SAME REASON, their duties as citizens of the State to pay tribute, and then their duties in social life, from the great moral principle of love to their neighbor. The apostle Peter also inculcates submission to civil authority, as exclusively from men (_____) from respect to the will of Christ, whether it be to the king, &c. (v. 13) -- "as the servants of God" (v. 16) enjoining upon them, in two distinct precepts, to fear God, and to honor the king (v. 17). He then recognizes the same moral obligation to another merely human institution, saying, "Servants, be subject to your masters (_____), with all fear, &c., and this for conscience toward God" (verses 18, 19). But not to dwell longer on this part of the subject, I only ask, When, since God abolished the Jewish theocracy, has he assumed the relation of national king or tutelary deity over any other nation, or promised national temporal blessings, or threatened national temporal calamities to nations, as they should obey or disobey his laws as the moral governor of men as moral beings?

These considerations are deemed quite sufficient to show how entirely distinct the moral government of God over men is from a national or civil government, whether the latter be a theocracy like the Mosaic law, or a merely human institution; and that while the former or Mosaic law, was merely a civil government in the form of theocracy. What under the national government were primarily and properly civil enactments, as the ten commandments were, would indeed lose this character after the abrogation of the Mosaic or national law, but so far as they were moral precepts, or could with the shadow of propriety or truth be called such, they were binding on all men before the Mosaic law was given, and equally so as moral precepts while that law existed, and after its abrogation. *Lex stat, dum ratio manet*. Should any of these be enacted by the civil law of a State as involving overt action useful to the State, they would as such be merely civil laws, to be enforced only by civil authority with only temporal sanctions, and not by such authority as being in their nature moral precepts. Under this aspect or character, they are not civil laws but divine, and can be enforced by no authority, even that of a whole senate of kings, but only by the authority of God as the moral governor of men.

Finally. That the Mosaic law was simply a national institution appears from its late beginning and transient continuance. What the apostle has said on this subject, in Gal. iii., we shall presently see. I advert to it in the present connection to show, that had the Jews reasoned from the known facts in the case, as they ought to have reasoned, they would have adopted the same argument, and come to the same conclusion with the apostle. From the creation of man in paradise, God assumed toward him the high and immutable relation of a perfect moral governor -- a relation to which every other was forever to be subservient. The first form of this government was that of a strictly legal system, consisting of a perfect rule of action to men as moral beings, which was also a perfect rule of judgment, and designed as such to secure their absolute moral perfection. From the hour of man's apostasy however, this particular form of this system was greatly modified. Without impairing in the slightest degree its adaptation to secure the absolute perfection of men as moral beings, a method of grace was combined with it, by which its rule of judgment was changed. It was as thus modified, not only divinely fitted as

before to restore to obedience to its perfect rule of action a race of sinful moral beings, but also by its rule of judgment, to restore them as fully to the favor and friendship of their offended sovereign as had they never sinned. Such became now the form of God's perfect moral government over men, permanent and eternal, with a perfection excluding, in every essential respect, all further modification or change. His system of moral government for a sinful world, in its substantial fullness and glory, though not in its minuteness of detail, was revealed to the first parents of our race immediately on their apostasy, and with its heavenly light shone on the world from the beginning of the patriarchal dispensation. Its reclaiming power and saving influence were effectually disclosed in Abel, in Enoch, in Noah (Heb. xi. 4, 5, 7), and doubtless in multitudes besides. There were it is true, sad and awful counteractions of its benign tendency which only proved its reality, while God by his vindictive judgments in this world for two thousand years, more impressively upheld and enforced his authority as the moral governor of men, than he ever has since in this world's history. Thus, for this long period, God presented himself to men, in one, it may almost be said in only one -- every other being subservient to this -- high and august relation, that of their perfect moral governor, "merciful and gracious" which his absolute right to reign over them fully sustained. Nor can it be said with the least plausibility of truth, that he did not impart by revelation all that religious and moral truth to men, and in every essential form of doctrine and of precept, which was sufficient to reclaim every individual to whom the revelation came. From the calling of Abraham and during the Abrahamic dispensation, God greatly in some respects, augmented both to this patriarch and to his descendants, the light of that truth which he had before revealed in the promise of Eden. This advance in revelation however, consisted in greater particularity of detail, and greater clearness and fullness of exhibition, rather than in any essential addition to its comprehensive import. Indeed it would be difficult to find, either in the decalogue or in any subsequent part of the Old Testament, one moral precept viewed in its moral aspect, and as universally binding on men, which cannot also be found clearly revealed, or at least well understood, under the Abrahamic dispensation. So greatly was the light of religious and moral truth increased by this covenant -- this _____ -- so rich, abundant, and superabundant were its promises to the righteous, not merely in temporal, but in eternal blessings (Gen. xvii), so clearly and fully did this covenant unfold the only way of acceptance with God -- the nature of religion and of moral duties -- all

truth which was necessary, if unperverted, to form the character of the perfect man (Gen. xvii. 1), that the apostle (Gal. iii. 8) calls it the Gospel preached before unto Abraham. With this revelation of God's moral government to Abraham and his descendants, and through them designed for all nations, comprising every thing of moment to men as moral and immortal beings, and being as constituting the Gospel itself, incapable of higher perfection -- being the Gospel itself -- we come, in the history of this people, within less than five centuries, to another peculiar, widely, even essentially different dispensation from any which had preceded it, Twenty-five centuries since the creation of the world had passed away, and neither the Mosaic law, nor any thing essentially like it from God, had been heard of by men. This dispensation could add nothing to, and take nothing from that which already existed, and was already perfect and unchangeable. It has been distinguished as the Mosaic dispensation. It was that in which God, after delivering the descendants of Abraham from a long and cruel bondage of four hundred years in Egypt, placed and continued them under a system of government, which he established and administered over them by Moses. But was it that perfect moral government and only moral government, which God had administered over men as moral and immortal beings since the first apostasy -- the only one which he will administer in common to all men to the end of time, and according to which he will judge the world in righteousness and fix the allotments of all in eternity? Was the Mosaic law in its true and essential character, the covenant made with Abraham -- was it the Gospel? Plainly whatever else it was, it had not one essential characteristic of God's moral government over men; not one, in respect to its authority, its requirements, its administration, its sanctions, or its retributions. For these as we have seen, were each and all political or civil in their nature and relations. In all these respects, it was a separate distinct institution, and as such might have subsisted in its peculiar individuality, though God's moral government had never been revealed, or even had had no existence. What then, I ask again, was the Mosaic law given to Israel at so late a period of this world's history? Did it add any thing to, or take any thing from that moral government of God, which was already absolutely perfect and unchangeable? What addition to or subtraction from such a government of God -- a government which, from its very nature and the nature of its promises, could be justly viewed in its high and essential characteristic only as moral, and therefore in duration, eternal -- what

addition to, or subtraction from such a government of God, either in its authority, its theology, or its ethics, could any unperverted rational mind conceive to be made, by an institution which had not a single characteristic except that of a national or civil government? Could it be supposed that the latter should annul the former?

And now I further ask, what could these descendants of Abraham, with unperverted minds, with their Egyptian education and notions of government, and especially with their knowledge of the recent origin of this Mosaic law as a new system of government, now just instituted for them by the God of their fathers, judge this law to be? If they knew any thing of the covenant with Abraham, the moral government of God, they knew in one respect; what the Mosaic law was not. They knew well what a theocracy was. They well understood, that in and of itself it was simply a peculiar -- compared with what we call such -- national institution, deriving its whole authority, in every instant of its existence, directly and solely from a National Divinity, who assumed and acted in the relation of the national king and tutelary deity of the nation over whom he thus reigned; and who administered such a government over his subjects as a representative system -- thus representing another and higher system of moral government over them as moral and immortal beings. What else then, could these descendants of Abraham rationally and honestly believe the Mosaic law -- a law before unheard of since the creation of the world as coming from the one only living and true God, now given by Abraham's God exclusively to them as his descendants -- what else could they conclude this new law from the God of the fathers to be, but a theocracy with its unquestioned and unquestionable characteristic of a representative system?

If now we appeal to facts, we cannot doubt after what the apostle has told us (Heb. xi. 29), that among those who came out of Egypt, and among those of subsequent generations, there were some, more or less, at different periods of their history, who were the sincere worshipers and true servants of God; who like Abraham and other patriarchs died in faith, and who not having received the promises, i.e., the things promised, embraced them. This in its true import, can involve nothing less than

embracing the comprehensive promise of justification by faith, unto eternal life. This was universally the method of justification relied on by pious Israelites, from the giving of the law at Sinai to the coming of the Messiah. Now whence had these men the knowledge of this method of justification before God, as the moral governor of moral and immortal beings? Not directly from the Mosaic law; for this, though a revelation from God to this people, revealed nothing directly or expressly of this method of justification for men as moral beings. Were this people then, living under this grand and only system of revelation given to any portion of the human race, left by it for fifteen centuries as destitute of all instruction concerning the true method of justification to eternal life, as had this revelation not been given? Was God's revelation during this long period, stationary, or retrograde? Was the light of salvation by the Abrahamic covenant, left to go out in darkness? or was it, as commonly supposed, progressive? But how progressive, or rather how did the Mosaic law shed one solitary ray of the light of truth on the most momentous of all subjects to sinful men, their justification to eternal life; how, unless as a lower system of national government it did represent, and was proved to right reason to represent God's higher system, of moral government through grace -- the covenant made with Abraham -- the substantial Gospel itself; and then how, by any conceivable mode of representation, could this higher system of truth have been so clearly, so fully, so impressively unfolded to the minds of men, as by that supernatural system of national law and national providence which God administered over Israel? If we imagine ourselves to have lived thus, as it were with God in sight every day and hour -- with such sensible manifestations of his presence and majesty as a jealous God, yet showing mercy to thousands, it would seem that the impression of his method of salvation might have been stronger than that from the transcendent intellectual and moral grandeur of the glorious Gospel, as now given by the Great Teacher and his apostles. That such was the tendency of the former mode of revelation compared with the latter, and considered in relation to the degradation, and prejudices, and perverseness of the minds of those to whom it was given, there can I think be no doubt. Indeed, if we would form some just estimate of the fitness of the Mosaic economy to its high and ulterior design, we must consider the almost noon-tide light and splendors of the Gospel, which broke through the clouds of that economy when approaching its end and consummation. How sweet, and rapturous, and heaven -- anticipating

were some of the songs of David! How grand, how sublimely entrancing, some of the themes and visions of Isaiah, as of one standing before the throne of God! How did some of the later fervid prophets of Israel already begin to summon a sinful nation to repentance and faith, as with the last trump, announcing eternal retribution as at hand! And how in so doing was the Mosaic economy, so to speak, used and appealed to, as a system of illustration and representation! And what was all this, but the progress of God's revelation, begun in the promised redemption in paradise, enlarged by the divine comprehensiveness and rich and wonderful details of the Abrahamic covenant, and still brightening onward, in the most impressive illustrations conceivable of the Mosaic economy, till the meridian sun of Christianity is ready to break in full effulgence on a benighted world!

LECTURE IV: THE MOSAIC LAW A THEOCRACY.

The Mosaic law shown to be a theocracy by its adaptation to a people trained in Egypt, particularly as designed to exhibit, by representation, God's moral government. -- The Israelites accustomed in Egypt to such a system. -- They would naturally infer the new government to be similar. Given from God, it could not but suggest some higher truths. -- Reflection would confirm the suggestion. -- The Hebrew ritual similar to the Egyptian in many particulars. -- A representative system adapted to the great ends which God must have proposed.

HAVING attempted to show that the Mosaic law was a theocracy, from some of the prominent characteristics of the law itself, I now proceed, as I proposed, to show the same things. From the fact that the character, views, modes of thought, of the Israelites were wholly Egyptian, when they received the law.

It seems to be quite undeniable, that the earlier revelations of God were comparatively obscure, and that the light of divine truth, which was by this means to be shed on the world, was, in the wisdom of God, to be

progressive. Many of the most important truths were delivered in such a manner as to convey only very general conceptions of their nature, and scarcely to disclose at all the great principles on which they were founded. Witness the law given to our first parents as compared with its subsequent fuller form, the first promise of redemption, the covenant with Abraham, and as illustrating the same thing, the disclosures of our Lord respecting the event of his death and the nature of his kingdom. If such concealment was maintained in these cases; if principles, relations, designs, of highest moment as we might account them, were left to mere inference, why should more be expected on the subject under consideration? In accordance with this fact, the whole system of God's administration by Moses, as presented in the Old Testament, is, we claim to have shown, presented in language and which, in its primary literal meaning, can be applied to nothing but a national or political system of government -- the Jewish theocracy.

It becomes then an inquiry of deep interest to the interpreter of the Scriptures, of what importance to us is a very considerable part at least of those ancient Hebrew writings called the Old Testament, especially as teaching religious truth? Or thus; we may inquire, what truths if any, are taught by this national institution respecting that higher and more perfect system of moral government which God administers over the world of moral beings; and how, or in what way or mode, are these truths respecting the latter to be learned from the former? What has been already said is sufficient to show that these truths are not to be ascertained from a large part of the language of the Old Testament, interpreted in its primary and literal import. The few passages in the later prophets, which as revelation progressed are exceptions to our general remark, need not be noticed as qualifying the proposition that the Old Testament interpreted as above stated, to a great extent simply unfolds the facts and principles of the national institution as such. The question then, still recurs, how can we learn, or rather how could the nation of Israel for long centuries learn any thing concerning God's higher system of moral government from the civil government which he administered over that people? I answer in two ways, which in some respects differ, but which it is not perhaps easy, and certainly not necessary in all cases to distinguish; viz., by inference, and by representation.

I shall now proceed to a course of remark which will serve to explain and confirm the proposition that the Jewish theocracy was designed to exhibit by inference and representation, God's higher system of moral government over men as moral beings, under an economy of grace.

God then originally revealed himself to the first parents of our race, in the high and immutable relation which necessarily results from his own character, and from the nature and condition of his moral creatures -- that of their perfect moral governor. The moral government thus instituted was one, as we speak, of mere law, of which the rule of action was also a rule of judgment. Its great design was defeated by the apostasy; and immediately after this event, God combined with this institution an economy of grace: in other words, he revealed himself as henceforth administering his moral government over men under an economy of grace. This institution in its present form was afterward more fully revealed to Abraham, being in the language of the apostle, "the Gospel before preached unto Abraham" (Gal. iii. 8). Here then, we have that form of moral government which God has administered since the apostasy, and still administers over this sinful world. This is perpetual, universal, unchangeable. This institution -- _____ -- the Mosaic law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, could not disannul (Gal. iii. 15-17). It remained unchanged and in full force over Israel and over all men, as the one and only form of God's moral government over them as moral beings. The Mosaic law or theocracy was added, not to set it aside, to alter, to ratify or perfect it, in any respect whatever; but "because of transgressions" -- because of its actual failure through the idolatry and wickedness of men, to accomplish the end for which it was designed. To this universal, unchangeable system of moral government over men, "the law," the Jewish theocracy, was wholly subservient, being designed and fitted as a means of preventing its perversion and securing its end. This Mosaic law was, as the apostle describes it, "our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

What then, was this Mosaic law -- the Jewish theocracy? It was as we have said, a national or civil government, in which God in addition to that higher relation of a perfect moral governor, which he sustained toward

Israel and toward all men as moral beings, assumed the new and comprehensive relation peculiar to that people, of their national king and national God or tutelary deity.

The Israelites, by their residence in Egypt through successive generations, had become thoroughly Egyptian in their views, opinions, and modes of reasoning, respecting civil government and religion. Though they had not wholly lost all knowledge of the God of their fathers, they had evidently lost it for all practical purposes. They had no confidence in the success of the mission of Moses to deliver them (Ex. xiv. 12), nor were all the miracles which they witnessed in Egypt, at the Red Sea and Mount Sinai, sufficient to cure them of their idolatry, or to break up their purpose to return to Egypt. That such was their character, such their extreme degradation and perverseness as idolaters, when they left Egypt, with all those practical views in respect to government and religion which were universal under the idolatrous theocracy of that country and other nations, so clearly appears from their history by Moses, that to prove it would be superfluous to any one who reads and believes that history.

With these facts before us, the principle of our argument as hereafter to be presented, may be thus stated: that as the Israelites when in Egypt, had in their views, opinions, and modes of reasoning in respect to government and religion, become thoroughly Egyptian, and that as the Egyptian theocracy or national government implied in their view, another and higher system of government administered by their national Divinity, soothe theocracy or national government, instituted by God over this people would naturally, and should according to the prevailing modes of thinking, be in like manner understood to imply another and higher system of government.

It would be so understood by a natural conclusion. By this I mean, by one of those conclusions which is given not by formal reflection -- not by a well-considered reasoning process but by that ready and almost unavoidable suggestion, which arises from familiarity with the subject in

similar cases.

That we may the better estimate the force of this argument, let us advert briefly to the more prominent and familiar facts of the case. God then had formed the design of introducing and preserving the knowledge of himself as the only true God in an idolatrous world. This design was to be accomplished by separating the descendants of Abraham who were now in Egypt, from all other nations, and by establishing over these descendants the same kind of government as that to which they had been accustomed -- a theocracy. They were now groaning under the yoke of oppression, and wholly given to idolatry with the people among whom they dwelt. One of their own brethren was sent to them with a message from God, who was to become under God, their divinely authorized leader and lawgiver. This was no mere pretense of Moses, as was that of other political rulers. He proved his mission to be divine, by such miraculous works and such superior wisdom as no other lawgiver could pretend to. This message, accompanied with signs and wonders and proved to be from the God of their fathers, whose virtues he had promised to reward with distinguished blessings on their posterity, announced their speedy deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and the sure possession of the land of Canaan as the scene of the promised inheritance. The people hearken to the voice of their leader, and are delivered. On the third month after their departure from Egypt, they come to Mount Sinai. Here God first informs them of his great design toward them -- and it is worth while to inquire how his language would be understood by this idolatrous people -- saying, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people, for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. xix. 5, 6). The people at once consent, saying, "All that the Lord hath said, will we do." And now God amid thunderings and lightnings, and under the name of the Lord their God, that brought them out of the land of Egypt, delivers the covenant or code of laws by which they were to be governed. This as we have seen, was on the face of it a system of laws given to this people by Jehovah, as their national king and national God.

It is to be remembered also, that the notion of tutelary deities, which we find then in Egypt, was universal throughout the Gentile world. This notion was, that the earth was divided by its Creator among a number of subordinate divinities, each of which was employed in the protection and care of his own people, and was the local deity of the country -- its exclusive and rightful possessor. Thus, after God selected Judea for his peculiar residence and dominion, it was called "his land" (Jer. x. 16; li. 10). In confirmation of this view, we refer to Deut. xxxii. 8, 9; 1 Kings, xx. 23; 2 Kings, xvii. 23; 2 Chron. xxxii. 19. There was also a sort of inter-community of the gods of one nation with the gods of another; so that when the people of one country removed to another, they were expected to recognize the gods of the country to which they removed, though they did not abandon the worship of their own. Those also who conquered and possessed another country were obliged to maintain in all their accustomed honors, the gods of the conquered country. Whatever gods of their own they might bring with them, they were to render all due service to the local god of the acquired country. Even mere sojourners from a foreign country refusing to sacrifice to the god of the place where they sojourned, were esteemed guilty of impiety. Great benefits were supposed to result from this; so much so, that it became in part the cause of the idolatry of the Israelites who visited foreign countries. (Vide 2 Kings, xvii. 24, sqq.) It was this superstitious reverence for the tutelary gods of Canaan which was one cause of the defections of this people, when Canaan became their own possession.

With these things in view, let us now suppose that this people had left Egypt for some other country than Canaan, and under the patronage and direction of some other God than Jehovah--would they not have transferred those views and opinions in which they had been educated concerning their relations to the king and tutelary gods of Egypt, to the king and tutelary deity of the country to which they should go. Especially if he whom they should now acknowledge as their king and their god, should institute a similar form of government with similar rites of worship, would they not regard them as instituted for similar purposes? If they had believed in a future state of rewards and punishments, would they not still believe in it? If they had performed the services, rites, and ceremonies of the Egyptian theocracy, and submitted habitually to the authority of its

laws, with the full conviction that it implied or was connected with a higher system of government founded on a future, immortal existence--would they not still retain these views of the subject, and be led to regard their present relations to the system of government as substantially the same? And when the true character of their national king and national God should be, as it was in respect to Israel, more fully unfolded with its new relations, and with the most distinct correction of former false opinions -- would not their views of the higher system be changed and modified accordingly? Would not the natural conclusion still be, that the lower system of a theocracy now was designed to exhibit, even with increased advantages, the higher system of moral government, as well as formerly in Egypt? I mean, would not all this be natural and highly probable?

I now remark again, that --

1. The same conclusion would result from more formal inference. By this I mean, reflection in formal reasoning.

Here it is to be remembered, that the question is not what inferences or conclusions were actually derived by this people from the premises -- but the question is, at what conclusions had they the means of arriving by due reflection, and without mental perversion on their part? It is also to be specially considered, that we have already shown that man under the mere light of nature, could come to the knowledge of God as administering a perfect moral government over this world under a gracious economy. And still more especially, that God had revealed this system of government from the fall of Adam to the patriarchs, and pre-eminently to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the ancestors of this people, and this in the form of a covenant which it would seem could never be forgotten -- of a covenant from which Paul, as the chief source of his argument with Jews proves the reality and unfolds the nature of God's system of moral government through grace, over both Jews and Gentiles. The question now is, what further means of knowledge and faith on this great subject, was furnished by the Jewish theocracy?

Here the first thing to be noticed is the full and formal promulgation of the perfect law of his moral government -- the perfect rule of action -- revealing the sum of all duty on the part of moral beings. Less than this, according to the principles before stated, he could not require as a rule of action, in the relation of a national ruler. This was also a thing too momentous to be left to be decided in any other way than by the most clear and explicit disclosure in such a revelation. In assuming therefore, the relation of a national king, God did not jeopardize the great interests of holiness, or of perfect moral excellence by lowering or obscuring the perfect rule of action or duty. He did not endanger or sacrifice the moral perfection of man by presenting a false standard of moral character. He made a full and formal promulgation of the perfect law of his perfect moral government.

I now ask, what was the rational inference from this fact? Was it that God did not administer a perfect moral government over them? Plainly such a fact considered in itself and without opposing evidence, would as we have seen, require according to every principle of just reasoning, the opposite conclusion -- that God is administering a perfect moral government over men.

Further, God as national king revealed another rule of action as the rule of judgment, which as we have seen was not, and could not be, any thing less than the same requirement under a perfect moral government through grace -- the requirement of some degree of personal holiness. But was there anything in this fact to impart doubt or uncertainty to our main inference? Not surely the fact that God did not proceed on the strict principles of a merely legal system, for the very system itself as a system of grace, necessarily excluded a merely legal system. God was ever showing himself under the theocracy or lower system, as a national ruler, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin against the civil government, on condition of repentance and making external conduct, more humano, the criterion of judgment. God as an infinitely perfect Being, could require nothing less than some degree of personal holiness -- true spiritual piety - - as the rule of judgment; and as national ruler administering a civil government, he could make nothing the criterion of judgment but external

conduct. Who could suppose that God, who always revealed himself as the omniscient searcher of the heart -- who had so clearly revealed his perfect law as the rule of action, and the law of personal holiness in some degree, of spiritual repentance, as the rule of judgment, could ever be satisfied with or receive to actual favor, a subject even under the national system, on the ground of external conduct, merely because, more humano, he on this ground treated him with favor? Could any civil ruler regard with affection a known traitor, merely because through overt action he could not be convicted of treason? Plainly here again, God left no possible ground of mistake even under the national requirement, in respect to the rule of judgment, except by the most palpable and inexcusable perversion. No principle of a perfect moral government is abandoned in the lower system of civil government; but rather every essential principle of the former is preserved and clearly inculcated in the latter, so far as it is possible from the nature of the case; while none is adopted in the latter, which is not manifestly inseparable from its nature. Indeed, the very principle so palpably adopted in the lower or civil system, not merely of requiring perfect holiness as a rule of action, but of requiring imperfect personal holiness as the rule of judgment, though external conduct is the criterion of judgment, sheds a constant and strong light on the fact that personal holiness would, and that nothing else would, render any one even as a mere citizen or subject of civil government, an object of the actual friendship and favor of the moral lawgiver. But if God as national king and tutelary deity, actually promised even by an extraordinary and miraculous providence, and subverted the laws of nature in execution of the promise to confer earthly happiness in effect for merely external conduct, with what higher approbation must he regard, and with what richer gifts would he bless, not merely the sinless obedience of a perfect heart, but the full, actual compliance with the known rule of judgment in a penitent and contrite heart? Be it here remembered, that this people fully believed in a future state of rewards and punishments. Through their Egyptian education, if in no other way, they also believed in a lower system of divine government with pardon; and a higher system of divine government through grace. And with these premises admitted, how could they believe that God should as he did in effect, confer the richest earthly rewards for merely hypocritical service under the one system, and leave sincere, true-hearted compliance with the only revealed or even possible rule of judgment unrewarded under the other? Could any honest, reflective reasoning on the subject, have

resulted in a doubt? Difficult as at first sight it would seem to be, I know that the error, the grand error, of the Jew, was that he legalized mere external conformity to the Mosaic law as a rule of action and of judgment, into full compliance with the claims of God upon him, and thus, on principles of law and equity, expected acceptance and favor with God. From what could such an error -- an error under the light of so much truth -- a practical error of such serious, everlasting moment -- result, except from a most palpable and fearful perversion of the mind? Which was the most rational inference from the premises, that because God as a national king, like other national rulers awarded earthly good, in effect, for mere external compliance with the rule of judgment, for the mere show of actual obedience, this was the full claim of God as a moral ruler, or -- in view of the express and unqualified language of requirement as reaching the heart -- that a spiritual obedience would, and such obedience only would secure the higher reward of a future world? No degree of intellect which pertains to a rational being, if unperverted, it would seem, could in such a case fail to adopt the latter conclusion. How too, do the reproofs and denunciations of God for the want of spiritual service -- the homage of the heart on the part of this people, show the manner in which he expected them to reason on this subject, and with what unqualified wrath he regarded them, in every relation, for this failure?

I remark again, that --

2. What was thus clearly exhibited to the rational and unperverted mind on this subject, in the mode of obvious and palpable inference, was decisively shown in another mode, viz., by representation.

Our first argument on this topic may be thus comprehensively presented -
- The theocracy or national government of Egypt, was a representative system. Under this government, the Israelites who were delivered from Egypt by Moses, had been born and educated. They had imbibed the strongest attachment to this kind of national government -- not to say, they had no conception of any other. It was difficult to bring them to leave Egypt, and to receive a theocracy from the true God. It is incredible that

they ever should be brought to receive and submit to any other than one that, in their view, was a theocracy. When God therefore, had actually established such a government over this people, and when they had consented to receive it, it is reasonable to conclude that they understood and regarded it and that God designed that they should understand and regard it, as a theocracy -- the same kind of government as that to which they had been accustomed in Egypt -- and therefore a representative system, exhibiting in its great and general principles his moral government over them as moral and immortal beings. The very establishment of such a system of government, in view of its known nature and design, involved the proof of its representative character.

This argument is much confirmed by considering the particulars included in it.

This people as already intimated, were so thoroughly Egyptian in their notions, opinions, and usages -- they were so profoundly degraded by their idolatry, and as a consequence so violently attached to a theocracy, to its shows, its rites, its pompous services, as their subsequent history from its very beginning through long ages proves -- that nothing is more incredible than that they should ever have been brought to acknowledge Jehovah as the only true God, by any other means than by his administration of such a government.

Again: a prominent and principal difficulty in restraining them from idolatry shows the same thing. When they came into the possession of the promised land, they expected great blessings from the tutelary gods of the nations which they conquered, as truly as from their own national Deity; and it was this expectation which made it so difficult to secure, not indeed the acknowledgment of Jehovah as their God, but the renunciation of other gods. Thus they persisted in all their accustomed views of a theocracy, and must have regarded it as a representative system. God therefore, in establishing such a government over them, must have intended that they should so regard it. What should lead them, according to the laws of rational belief, to separate from their conception

of a theocracy in the hands of God, their conception of every other theocracy, its relation as a representative system? While those laws of belief -- their assumed premises instead of being contradicted, being fully confirmed -- show that they ought not, and their inveterate attachments, that they would not separate these conceptions; the facts of their history down to the abolition of the national system, show that they did not.

This leads to another remark -- that the truly righteous among this people must have practically relied on and used this characteristic of the national system, while the wicked grossly perverted and abused it. The truly righteous must have had a sufficient, even a divine warrant for their faith in God as their rewarder in a future state of existence. That a theocracy was a representative system, had become throughout the earth a settled, undoubted truth -- a plain principle as it were of common sense, or rather of divine authority. Now how could any of those idolatrous Israelites who left Egypt, or any of their descendants, placed under a mere theocracy, find in such a system a divine warrant for that faith which looks to another world for its reward? If this system required this principle, did it promise aught but temporal good? If the covenant with Abraham was still not disannulled and in full force, how could they learn its nature or its import from a system of mere national law, which in its primary and obvious character and import, contained not a word either in the explanation or inculcation of that covenant? How then, under this protracted Mosaic dispensation, and by means of it, was the least divine warrant furnished for the prospects or the hopes of a truly religious faith, unless it was divinely constituted and regarded by every true believer as A REPRESENTATIVE system? Otherwise it is plain that the theocracy or national system could afford no authorized instruction respecting God's higher system of law and grace, as. the moral governor of moral beings; his revelation so far as what was taught or revealed by Moses, instead of being as commonly supposed, progressive, was retrogressive; and instead of attesting the righteousness of God without law, it held forth a mere political justification and temporal happiness and not eternal life as its only promised reward. All that is said in the New Testament, of its relation to Christ and salvation through him -- of which we shall speak more fully hereafter -- would be groundless and unwarranted.

Here, too, I may appeal also to that "cloud of witnesses," who, under the Mosaic dispensation, "obtained a good report through faith," and ask, what could warrant the faith of these holy men in this dispensation, unless it were justly viewed as representing the Gospel itself, shadowing faintly but still more brightly than before under the patriarchal dispensation, the covenant made with Abraham -- the grand charter of the Christian church and of human hope? And then again how could God through the whole history of this people, with their established views of a theocracy, be constantly presenting himself to them by the wonders of his power, as the Creator of the heaven and the earth -- as the only living and true God -- over both by his goodness and severity, causing all his glory to pass before them in the administration of a national system of law and grace, and yet they fail to see, in a temporal system so glorious, a higher system which "doth exceed in glory." If Abraham, when "receiving Isaac in a figure," saw the day of Christ and was glad, did not "many righteous" also see it with like emotion, through that august economy for Israel, so plainly designed and adapted as a representative system, to reveal that day in still brighter splendors? But on the other hand, not all; for of still greater multitudes, it must be said in the language of the apostle, "their minds were blinded;" for "until this day, when Moses is read, the vail is on their hearts." Here we have the cause of the grand error of this nation finally rejected of God for their unbelief. This error to the last was, that by a gross and palpable perversion of the representative character of their theocracy, instead of distinguishing as they ought, the national from the moral government of God, they so identified the two systems, as to reduce the whole government of God practically to a merely national or political system for both this and a future world. In this view, what the RULE Of judgment under both systems required -- personal religion, true holiness -- was lost sight of, and the CRITERION of judgment under the national system or mere overt action, was substituted in its place. Hence according to the apostle, they attained not to a law of righteousness -- because they sought it not by faith but, as it were, by works of law -- not even by conforming to the requirement -- the true rule of judgment -- of their national law, but as if it were so; by substituting external obedience the criterion of righteousness before a civil tribunal, for that spirit of loyalty, personal holiness, which the national as well as the moral system required, and which would have justified them under the latter. But failing in this, they attained to nothing beyond the mere criterion of righteousness under the national system.

They thus sought a mere quasi righteousness as citizens, or as subjects of civil government. Of course they attained to nothing more, and utterly failed of attaining to righteousness under the moral government of God. What then pertained to the theocracy, or national government, except its representative character, which could be thus perverted into this grand error of an unbelieving nation? God clearly presented himself to this people as their national king or ruler, making the rule of action and the rule of judgment as plain as language could make them, requiring in his rule of judgment that state of heart -- that spirit of loyalty, with its prescribed expressions in overt action, which was due to him as a being of infinite perfection, even under a gracious economy. This national government as a representative system also, would clearly show, that God as a moral governor reigning through grace, required the same state of mind as a rule of judgment. But now, in the actual administration of his national government, mere overt action necessarily became not the rule but the criterion of judgment, and actually secured the justification of the externally obedient subject. Hence as subjects of civil government, and so it commonly is in like cases, the criterion of judgment was substituted for the rule of judgment, and all their solicitude and aim directed to the criterion of judgment, i.e., to mere external obedience. This, with that want of thorough reflection so common and natural to man, would be regarded as the fulfillment of every claim of God, and so be relied on as a legal righteousness. Such was undeniably the grand error of this people, and such plainly the process by which they fell into it. At least, what else in the theocracy of this people, except its representative character, could be made by their depraved heart and perverted intellect (2 Cor. iii. 14, 15), the occasion of believing that righteousness by works of law was to be attained before God as a moral governor, it seems difficult to imagine. Is it credible that a Jew, or any other man, with a just and full apprehension of the broad and spiritual import of God's perfect law, should persuade himself that he fulfilled its claim, and by so doing bad or could have a righteousness in law? Is it any more credible that he should persuade himself, that any merely external morality or ritual service was all that the law required, in view of its abundant claims on the heart? Is any thing credible in the case, except that he was willfully ignorant of the true spiritual import of the law -- that assuming that the rule of action and of judgment were the same under the national and moral system, be further vainly and falsely assumed, that his exact and scrupulous external conformity to the national law was decisive proof of entire conformity with

its demand on the heart; and thus arrived at the conclusion, that he met and satisfied every claim of God as a lawgiver and was therefore righteous in law? Was not this the error of the young ruler, who so vainly supposed that he had kept the whole law -- an error so plainly exposed by the Saviour, when applying the test of true moral principle to the heart? Was it not the error of Paul before the commandment came, and which he so frankly confesses when he says, "as touching the righteousness of the law, blameless" -- an error exposed only by the saying of the law, "thou shalt not covet?" Was it not the error of supposing that the rule of action and of judgment under the national law, with its whole demand sunk to the Mello criterion of judgment under this law, was the rule of action and of judgment under God's moral system -- an error which has ever been, and is now, the grand and fatal obstacle on the part of this people to their reception of the Gospel? Now it would seem, that there must be some characteristic of the national system -- some existing relation of it to the moral System, as the original occasion of this grand Jewish error. Otherwise, an error so flagrant could not possess the semblance of plausibility, even in the most perverted mind. The representative character of the national system affords in the manner described, an obvious and natural account of the origin of this error, when it cannot I think be accounted for in any other way. If this be the true account of it, then was the theocracy of Israel a representative system.

Another consideration, which shows that God designed the theocracy of Israel should be, and that therefore it was, a representative system, is that it so far, or in such degree, resembled the Egyptian theocracy. By this I do not mean that there was a resemblance in all the minute details or peculiarities of the two theocracies. Nothing is more remote from the truth. In the Jewish system, every thing was changed and made different from the Egyptian, which was required by the great object or end of the former, viz., to bring the people to renounce idolatry, and to understand and receive the higher or represented system of God's moral government. But I mean such a resemblance in certain general and essential elements as determine each system to be a theocracy. In proof of this I remark, that --

3. Both systems, in their primary character, were simply systems of national or political government. In this character, as we have shown, the laws of each respected only the political conduct of their subjects -- inculcated that spirit of loyalty which was due to the exalted character of the supreme national ruler, but only in this relation -- were enforced only by temporal sanctions, and administered only according to the principles of a civil government.

Both systems distinctly and prominently recognized the divinity as the national king and tutelary deity, a determining element which greatly modified the political government or theocracy of all nations. Hence,

Both systems included the general, comprehensive requirement of obedience to the national king, as sustaining also the relation of tutelary deity in the administration of a particular and an extraordinary providence. From this latter relation, as combined with the former, resulted the laws requiring what may be called political rather than religious worship, since obedience to these was as truly obedience to the national ruler as any other. As such obedience, it was required and rendered only as the appointed means of securing temporal blessings, and averting temporal calamities. Thus, a spirit of loyalty with its overt doings, in what was called in heathen language a life of piety and virtue, or in Jewish language Holiness, as obedience to the divinity in the twofold relation of national king and national God, was inculcated and enforced in both systems. It is not of course, to be pretended that the things meant by this language in the two cases were the same things, especially in view of the difference between the character of a pagan divinity and that of the true God. The terms were used to denote the conceptions, which were formed under widely different standards of piety and virtue. Under one System it may be difficult to say what they did denote, beyond a vague and general notion of obedience as satisfying the divinity.

Under the other, they denoted in one relation true spiritual religion, or what was visibly such and properly spoken of as such.

Each of the two systems was a system of law and grace combined. That each was a system of law, as including authoritative rules of action, will not be denied; while, as we have seen in the pagan rites, the performance of lustrations which cleansed from guilt, and the offering of sacrifices and incense, to win the favor and avert the wrath of the gods, are not less obvious than the atonements and consequent forgiveness under the Mosaic institution.

Further, both systems included a rule of action and a rule of judgment, differing from each other and plainly distinguished. I do not say that the nature and import of these rules were unfolded with equal plainness and precision under the two systems. But that the difference between these rules -- the rule by the transgression of which sin and condemnation begin, and the rule of repentance by which pardon and acceptance are obtained -- was not less real, or less actually distinguished in the Egyptian than in the Hebrew theocracy, is as truly evinced in the lustrations and offerings of the former as in the sin -- offerings and especially in the great annual atonement of the latter.

Once more: The most surprising resemblance between the Egyptian and Hebrew theocracies, is in the ritual parts of the two systems. On this part of the subject: I shall only refer again to the learned work of Spencer, *De legibus Hebræorum ritualibus et earum rationibus*, remarking, with Warburton, "that the RITUAL LAW when thus explained, is seen to be an institution of the most beautiful and sublime contrivance, which, without its causes (nowhere to be found but in the road of this hypothesis), must lie open to the scorn and contempt of libertines and unbelievers." Like this author, "I mean to charge myself with no more of Spencer's opinions than what directly tend to the proof of this part of my proposition, viz., that there is a great and surprising relation and resemblance between the Jewish and Egyptian rites, in circumstances both opposite and similar." Spencer has not only assigned an adequate reason for the resemblance of the Hebrew rites to the Egyptian, in the design of God by their splendor to attract the people and to prevent their return to Egyptian superstition, but has given, as has Warburton also, decisive proofs that the Egyptians

did not borrow from the Hebrews, but the Hebrews from the Egyptians.

To form the present argument, we have now to put two things together. The Egyptian theocracy was, and as we claim to have shown, ought to have been considered by the Israelites who were brought out of Egypt, a representative system, exhibiting a higher system of moral government. Between this Egyptian theocracy and the theocracy which God established over the same people, there was, so far as the form or kind of government is concerned, in every substantial respect a resemblance so complete as to show that the latter system was substantially copied from the former. I now ask, why this resemblance between the theocracy which God established over this people, and that under which they had been educated in Egypt, and for which they had such strong and almost invincible predilections, unless like the latter, God designed that they should regard it as being, and thus that it should be a representative system?

This view is further confirmed by the consideration, that no other satisfactory account can be given of his adopting such a system of government, for the great purpose or end proposed. The more direct object of this institution may be said to be, to reclaim them from idolatry to the knowledge of himself as the only living and true God, and thus to true religion. But why should God adopt a mere national or civil polity for such a purpose, which, neither in the language in which it is revealed, nor yet in any authorized way or method could afford increased instruction, or even the least instruction concerning that moral government of God over men, without the knowledge of which true religion on the part of man is utterly hopeless (Heb. xi. 6)? To have left the acquisition of this knowledge to mere inference, sufficient as this would be to the unperverted mind, would have been in vain, as is fully proved by the entire failure of even the higher instruction and stronger light furnished by the covenant with Abraham. Will it then be said, that the design of God in this political government, was according to literal promise simply to make the nation politically great? But such plainly, was not his great and ulterior end, nor an end which, as his great end, was in the lowest degree worthy of himself. This is to suppose that the God of the patriarchs, by this new institution, should throw all his prior revelations into obscurity and darkness in respect to this paganized nation; that he should only confirm

them if not in their idolatry, in the utter irreligion and impiety involved in it; that he had forgotten his covenant with the father of the faithful; that the God of eternity, in revealing himself to successive generations of creatures made in his own image, sunk his relation as reigning over them in the glories of a perfect moral dominion, to that of a mere civil ruler of men as the insects of a day (Heb. xi. 16). If these things are incredible, what can we conclude, but that God by the theocracy of Israel designed, in the way of representation, to exhibit in clearer light than he had done before, his perfect moral government over men?

Another consideration worthy, of notice is, that this system of government was pre-eminently fitted to the great end proposed, and thus renders the wisdom and goodness of God conspicuous in its adoption. That he could have adopted any other means so well fitted to its end as this, is beyond the power of human reason to show. It is God himself who asks, "What more could have been done in my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" In our ignorance on this question, and therefore without affirmation or denial, and also without aiming to unfold all the particular adaptations of the system to its end, I proceed to say --

4. That this system of government with their very existence as a nation, connected the manifestation of the only living and true God, and in the manner already shown, his almost constant worship and service as their tutelary God. How obvious then in this respect, and especially in view of the idolatry and extreme moral degradation of this people, is the fitness of the system to its high and ulterior design? The great, comprehensive requirement of the system, including the perfect rule of action and the rule of judgment considered in their relations as political rules, were presented in terms as plain as language could furnish, so that of these nothing but perverseness could be ignorant. At the same time we may safely say, in view of their subsequent conduct, that nothing but a theocracy would be regarded by them with respect; nothing but the strong sensible impressions of such a system would furnish the slightest hope of their moral elevation. On the other hand accustomed as they were to such a government, they were prepared to understand the character of that under which they were placed -- the latter scarcely

differing from the former except in one great fact, and what it necessarily involved -- a fact which it would seem could not be misunderstood or misapprehended -- that, instead of an Egyptian idol or dead men deified, the God of the nation is Jehovah. Moses also, who under God was their law giver "king in Jeshurun" -- as "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and under constant divine direction, was signally qualified to give, and especially to administer a theocracy conformed, except in that respect just specified, to that with which this people were familiar. By such conformity, it was in no degree consistent with its high design, fitted to offend their previously cherished attachments and prejudices. It rather coincided with them, and was in many respects, especially by its splendid ritual, fitted to attract their regard and to secure an entire and welcome reception. No innovations are introduced, no new burdens imposed, no prior usages changed, except what every rational mind must approve, when he who alone is God, whose are the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, is their national God instead of heathen idols. Nor was this system of government given and perpetuated without its high authority being established and kept constantly in view, as a system coming from him who is God over all. The whole nation saw the mighty hand and outstretched arm of the Almighty in their miraculous deliverance from Egypt, and at the giving of the law heard his voice amid the awful grandeurs of Sinai, while in blessings and calamities, and by an extraordinary providence, he shook the heavens and the earth throughout their subsequent history. If aught that can allure or terrify -- if aught of kindness and severity -- if aught could avail of sublimity, grandeur, glory, addressed to the sensible apprehension of a people hopeless in respect to all other impressions; when were the majesty and awful love of God in his rightful dominion, in this manner so presented to any people? If now we add to these things, that this national system was fully proved by its own nature, and according to all the laws of reasoning applicable to the case, to be a REPRESENTATIVE system, thus showing God in brighter manifestation than any prior revelation, in his higher relations -- how signal its adaptation to its end -- how conspicuous the condescension of God to this idolatrous and rebellious people! Human ingenuity may be defied to suggest a system of government and a course of providence, so perfectly adapted to the end designed, so illustrative of the wisdom and goodness of its author, in view of the character, the condition, and the necessities of this people.

And further, it will be generally admitted that the Mosaic system or law was designed to furnish a most convincing proof of the substantial nature and divine origin of Christianity. In what manner was this design accomplished? Not a word nor sentence, as we have before intimated, can be found in the Mosaic law -- the theocracy, as, such -- which in its primary, literal import, teaches or implies the moral government of God. Indeed, the express and full revelation of this system, as one afterward to be introduced in its fullness and perfection, and to supersede the national system, would doubtless have defeated another design of God, of indispensable accomplishment to his ulterior end -- the design of training them by a long course of discipline under this preparatory dispensation. For had this people this whole nation -- degraded and corrupt as they were, been fully convinced that their law was temporary and to have an end, they would have despised it, and, as they were wont to do with far less inducement have rejected the authority of Moses, before "the fullness of time" had brought into the world "the Desire of all nations." They would not have so prized it, under their burdensome ritual, as to wait for their spiritual deliverer. Hence divine wisdom and goodness conveyed this information with comparative obscurity -- an obscurity not so great but that sincere and honest inquiry would know and understand the higher system, and yet so great that perverseness and willful ignorance could not augment guilt by rejecting a clearer revelation. How was this accomplished by the Mosaic system of national government, unless it was a representative system exhibiting substantially the nature of God's higher system? How can any such correspondence be otherwise traced between the two systems, or any such dependence of one on the other, as shall prove that if one had a divine origin, the other had also -- a correspondence and dependence which show that not man, but God only, could be the author of either, and is therefore the author of both?

LECTURE V: THE MOSAIC LAW A THEOCRACY.

The Mosaic law shown to be a theocracy from the prevalence In early ages of representative language and symbolic actions -- as also from the

nature of the ewe. -- From examples in the Scriptures: Gen. iii. 15; xxii. 2; xii. and xvii.; Psalms 2, 22, 47, 67, 72. -- From the prophets. -- From Christ's manner of teaching, confirmed by his striking declarations in Matt. v. 17; John, xviii. 88; Luke, xxiv. 44, 45.

That the Mosaic law was a theocracy, I shall now further attempt to show
--

III. In the third place, from a common use of language in the early ages of the world, in which one thing is spoken of chiefly to denote another.

This use of language, which is frequent in both the Old Testament and the New, is of various species or kinds; and is distinguished in these respects by the various epithets of figurative, parabolic, allegorical, typical, &c. It consists, generally speaking, in so using language as to direct thought first to one thing either real or imaginary, for the purpose of representing another thing, and turning the thoughts to it as the main or principal thing intended to be thought of in the case.

I am not now approaching the question whether the language referred to, or any other language, has a double sense; nor shall I attempt formally to discuss this question, until at least the sense of the phrase double sense itself is accurately determined, and so distinguished from the variety of other senses in which the language has been used by the parties in controversy. Nor shall I now enter particularly into an inquiry concerning types, allegories, fables, parables, &c. I only take the more general ground, that truths of the highest moment were revealed to men under the Old Testament dispensation, in what I shall call the representative mode.

Nor can I, within my prescribed limits, pretend to do any thing like justice to this subject. I shall rather state my own views of some parts of it, and

refer you to authors who have treated it more largely than is possible in the present discussion.

And here, the propriety and reasonableness of this mode of revelation demand consideration, as well as the fact.

The object of all that can be called language, whether significant things or arbitrary sounds, is to convey some ideas or conceptions from one mind to another. This is its principal object or end. These ideas or conceptions constitute at least its principal meaning -- a meaning always designed, and without which the language would not be used. There is only one kind of language, since language has been so greatly improved and perfected by culture, which is fitted to express this one meaning and nothing more. This is true not only of scientific language, but of all ordinary literal language when properly used and interpreted in its logical connection. That such language, in the present improved state of it -- by which I mean literal language, language which expresses one meaning and nothing more -- should, to a vast extent, even for the ordinary purposes of life, be used, is of the highest importance not to say of absolute necessity. It is so, because it is the best language for its purposes, and because, since the degree of culture which language has received, any other kind substituted for this would occasion in many cases great perplexity, if not absolute uncertainty, in respect to its principal meaning, or what is to be understood.

But while all this is readily admitted, it does not follow either that this kind of language was, in any high degree of perfection, the language of the earliest ages of this world. Nor can it be shown that the very earliest language did not consist of significant things -- either actions, sounds, or other things -- nor that the earliest records were not made in the language of picture; nor that this was not followed by or connected with the language of representation; nor that whatever progress or improvement had been given to language by the introduction of arbitrary signs, in the time of Moses or earlier, the language of representation had not then more or less prevalence in the Hebrew nation. Nothing is more

obvious in respect to language, than that it was at first formed not for scientific purposes, but with almost no true or exact knowledge of things; formed with almost no reflection, and for the more direct and limited purposes of practical life; formed from mere sensible appearances, and that therefore it expressed, to a vast extent, only hasty, and hence false conceptions of things. This language of appearance, we know on reflection, is false in its actual meaning. For example, it is false in the actual meaning of the common language of life, that the sun rises and sets, that the sugar is sweet, that the ice is cold, that the kite flies, that the body moves, &c., &c. This language has become proper by usage, and answering the common purposes of practical life, the only thing which gives to such language its value or importance, it is of no consequence whether it be true or false. If the sun will be at a given time in a given point of space in relation to the earth, and this is all that we have occasion for common purposes to express, it is wholly immaterial whether we predicate self-motion of the body or not. Accordingly, the language of appearance ever has been used, and ever will be to the end of time.

And now why should there not be from the beginning, a language of representation, common and sanctioned by usage, as well as a language of appearance? Moreover if there are -- and we expect to show that there are -- important ends, even those of divine wisdom and mercy, to be answered by its use; and if in many instances all uncertainty in its use may be avoided as effectually as in the use of any other language; or if in others it involves a peculiar but useful degree of obscurity, then instead of any valid objections against its use there are decisive reasons for it. In short, if in all cases of its use there was no other kind of language which would as well answer the same useful purpose, then its use has an ample vindication. This is what is now to be maintained, and particularly on the subject under consideration. If, for example, of the two great dispensations of God by Moses and by Christ -- , the former was representative of the latter, it is easy to see what an overwhelming proof is furnished of God's revelation to the world; the two dispensations in this way affording the most decisive confirmation of the divine origin of both. Nor is this all. In view of the supposed fact that the theocracy or God's national government over Israel, represented, and was known to

represent, in all substantial respects, his moral government over men, language as applied to the former, must, to every unperverted mind, convey corresponding conceptions of the latter. Thus all perplexity and uncertainty in respect to the great object or end of the writer or speaker would be prevented, and his language might be interpreted with as much Precision and accuracy, according to the laws of usage in the case, as in any other case; and on the same general principle, viz., the object of the writer or speaker manifested in his language and manner of using it. When the use of the language of representation is common, has become conventional, and is familiarly employed in the communication of thought, it may be as easily distinguished from other language, by the nature of the subject and the logical connection, as language which has a metaphorical and a literal meaning.

I now come to the FACT that such a mode of imparting knowledge was adopted as I have described. And here I may say, that it was. not only adopted extensively by the writers of the Old Testament, but was, the principal mode of conveying that knowledge of the great truths of God's moral government under the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, which in more direct language is conveyed under the Christian dispensation.

Of the FACT now specified, the proof seems to me to be so obvious and abundant, that it can scarcely be necessary to attempt any full exhibition of it to the readers of the sacred writings. I propose therefore, only to give some illustrations of it, and to make some references which I think will be satisfactory.

The first instance is --

1. (Gen. iii. 15.) "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it [He] shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

I do not here propose to enter into any consideration of the many questions which have been raised respecting this text. I only say, on the authority of Jewish usage, it contains the great promise of a Redeemer. The proof, to say nothing of the allegorical structure of the language, is decisive, in the distinct allusions to it as such by Paul and John. (Vide Rom. xvi. 20; Col. ii. 15; Heb. ii. 14-15; 1 John, iii. 8.) This passage should also be viewed in its accordance with Gen. xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14; Gal. iii. 8; and with Isa. vii. 14; Jer. xxxi. 22; Mic. v. 3; Matt. i. 23; Rev. xx. 1-3, and xii. 9. Now, whether the language of this passage be interpreted in one specific meaning or another given by different commentators, it says nothing in its primary literal import respecting the Redeemer of the world. How then, according to Jewish usage, should it be understood as a promise of this Redeemer in its principal, and according to subsequent allusions to it, in its only meaning, unless it were regarded as the language of representation -- language used at least chiefly to describe one thing by describing in its primary import another?

3. (Gen. xxii. 2.) "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac," &c.

In the purport and object of this command, I agree with Warburton so nearly, that I shall state my own view of the passage nearly, in his words. The language of this command, in my view, directs to an action which represents the great sacrifice of Christ for the redemption of mankind. This view of the passage is shown from the words of Christ (John viii. 56); nor less clearly in Heb. xi. 19, where the apostle tells us that Abraham offered up Isaac, accounting that God was able to raise him from the dead, whence also he received him in a figure (___). The question put by the Jews to Christ, "Hast thou seen Abraham?" shows that they inferred this from what Christ had said of Abraham's seeing his day. But Warburton has, with so much ingenuity and truth, shown that the offering up of Isaac was an action which represented the sacrifice of Christ, that I shall refer you to what he has said on the subject, with the single remark, that if this was so, then the language used to describe the sacrifice of Isaac is the language of representation -- language which, while it primarily describes one thing, is employed chiefly for the purpose of denoting another.

4. (Gen. xii. and xvii.) The covenant made with Abraham. Compare Gal. iii.; Heb. xi. 16; also verses 8, 9, 10.

In respect to this covenant it may be said, that the apostle evidently considered some part of the language, viz., "I will be a God to thee," &c., as literal, and thus including the promise of the heavenly country. But I ask, in reply, is there any thing in the language of this covenant in its primary import, beyond the promise of great temporal blessings from God as a tutelary deity? Would Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or even Paul, aside from the language of representation, and adhering strictly to the *usus loquendi*, have justly understood the language, "I will be a God to thee," as promising the heavenly inheritance? Why must the mere promise, so far as words are concerned, of an earthly country, and limited, as in Gen. xii. 1, and xvii. 7, to great earthly blessings, be understood to mean even by implication, more than the terms of the covenant express, even of an inheritance in heaven? And further, if this were so in the literal import of the language, how was it that the Sadducees denied a future state with such decisive proof, as they argued; and especially, that the Pharisees, so anxious to find the proof of a future state, in their controversy with the Sadducees, entirely overlooked one so obvious and so prominent? Is not the evidence decisive, that both these Jewish sects, through their false views of justification before God on the ground of political obedience, and through their national pride, had been led to consider the promise as simply one of national greatness; and thus perversely blind to that higher spiritual system of grace clearly but representatively revealed in the Abrahamic covenant, were entirely ignorant of what both Christ and the apostle, with just views of its representative character, understood this covenant to teach?

A similar objection to the view now taken of this covenant may be supposed to arise from the language of this apostle in Gal. iii. 16: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds as of many," &c. My view of this passage, without here giving a critical exposition of it, is, that the apostle means to say -- not that the

covenant with Abraham included no promise to numerous natural descendants of Abraham, which cannot indeed be supposed -- but that THE promise of which he is speaking, the promise of justification before God by faith, was not made to his natural descendants as such; for though the word seed in the covenant is broad enough to admit, and did even require a promises or some promise, viz., that of an earthly country, to Abraham's natural descendants, yet, according to the well-known principle of representing one thing by another, the higher promise was made only to Christ, as the following context clearly shows, viz., to Christ, including as one in him the believing seed of Abraham. And to prevent all evasion of this conclusion, the apostle, proceeding on the true mode of interpreting the covenant, is careful to say, there is nothing in the wording of the covenant that confines this higher promise of justification, taught only by representation or inference, to any other import.

5. (Psalms 2d, 22d, 47th, 67th, 72d.) The predictions in these psalms evidently respect chiefly the coming and reign of the Messiah, and the admission of the Gentiles into the church of God. And yet the language is wholly theocratic, without a word, which in its primary and literal meaning, carries the thoughts beyond the temporal prosperity and extension of the national kingdom.

To instances of the use of this kind of language already mentioned, I might add many others in which it is employed by the prophets. I refer only to Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (chap. xxxvii.), and to one in Isa. xix. 18, sqq., remarking, that the predictions of the prophets, in which they foretell the future greatness and glory of the kingdom of Christ in language merely theocratic (Isa. lvi. 7), thus describing one thing by another, are so numerous, that to transcribe them would be tedious and unnecessary. (Isa. xx.; Jer. xiii.; Ezek. iv. v. vii. xii. and xxiv. are instances to our purpose). I only add, that of the three great festivals -- the Passover, the feast of Pentecost, and the feast of Tabernacles while the two first commemorated Israel's deliverance from Egypt and the promulgation of the law, so were they clearly representative of the sacrifice of Christ, and that miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit by which the Gospel was disseminated over the world; while the feast of

Tabernacles, as commemorative of their dwelling in booths, and on the eighth day returning to their houses (Lev. xxiii. 34-36, and 42, 43), seems not less clearly to represent the future conversion of the Jews, if not their return to their own land.

From these examples, the reader of the Old Testament must see, I think, that the revelation of the Redeemer and his work, or of God's moral government over this sinful world through grace, has, since the first apostasy, to a great extent been made in the language of representation. How undeniably true this is in respect to the language of the Abrahamic covenant -- that revelation of God's system of moral government so full and so complete that the apostle calls it "the Gospel, before preached unto Abraham!" If such symbolic language was employed to unfold the import of this covenant promulgated before Abraham's descendants entered the promised land, why should not similar language be employed in exhibiting God's national government over them when about to take, and after they had actually taken possession of this promised inheritance? Why are we not constrained to admit the fact, especially when we reflect that it would greatly increase the fullness of the revelation of the higher system; while, if such were not the fact, God, in a series of revelations through many centuries, did not in any other mode reveal himself in that highest and most august relation to men, in subservience to which he made and governs the world?

I might dwell on the present topic at much greater length were it necessary. Antiquity is full of examples, which show, as Livy tells us, that "this was the ancient mode of teaching." It prevailed among all the eastern and western nations long before the time of Christ. Especially was it used by the Jews. Some examples among the Jews are Judg. ix. 7; 2 Sam. xii. 1; 2 Kings, xiv. 9; 2 Chron. xxv. 18; Jer. v. 6; Ezek. xvii. 3. Others still might be cited.

I now propose to show the same thing from the New Testament, and particularly to show to what an extent the language of the Mosaic law, as well as other language of the Old Testament is recognized and reasoned

from by Paul, as being the language of representation. So far as the teachings of Christ are concerned, it cannot be necessary to say that he spoke many things in parables, and in other forms of figurative language. One obvious reason for adopting this use of language, at least in many cases, was, that his hearers could not so readily apprehend his instructions, nor so easily retain them when in the form of simple didactic discourse, as by means of similitude and examples derived from other things, whether real or imaginary. In what other manner than the story of the prodigal son, is it conceivable that our Lord could have so clearly and impressively imparted the instruction which is contained in this justly admired parable? How could that great problem with philosophers -- that crux theologorum -- the existence of moral evil in the world, have been so clearly explained, not merely to the philosopher according to true philosophical principles, but to every husbandman, to all the people, even those of the most humble life, as by the parable of the householder and that of the fisherman? (Vide Matt. xiii. 24, sqq.; xiii. 47.) And now could no light concerning God's moral government over men as moral beings, be added to his prior revelation on the subject, by the Mosaic law or Jewish theocracy as a system of national government representing or symbolizing his system of moral government? Let the former be supposed to be, what I claim it to be, a representative system; and can the ingenuity of man devise another method so adapted to impart and to impress instruction respecting God's moral government on the idolatrous and besotted mind of the people of Israel? Say not that it was for a long time and to a fearful degree, ineffective in respect to its supposed design. This proves nothing but a palpable counteraction of what must be admitted to be the means to an end, and divinely fitted to accomplish that end. Say not that far more salutary effects would have been produced on the minds of this people by the earlier introduction of Christianity into the world. How they treated Christianity when it was introduced into the world is told by the crucifixion of its author, and also in the destruction of their temple and their city and their dispersion over the earth for their unbelief. Far be it then from the pride and presumption of human judgment, to pronounce that God could have done more for the eternal salvation of this people at any period of their history. than he actually did by that national law and national providence which he administered over them. Let critics wrangle as they may about double sense, the theocracy of Israel as a representative system stands forth through many centuries a memorial dispensation of God, eminently designed and fitted to save a

nation and a world lost in sin. And if the teaching of the Great Teacher the Light of the world -- was to such an extent, by parable, and similitudes derived chiefly from things imaginary, why is it incredible that substantially the same mode of instruction, derived from a reality of knowledge constantly experienced, should have been adopted and relied on in the previous history of the same people?

But my object is not merely to vindicate the use of this kind of language, but to show from the New Testament, that it was in fact used in giving the Mosaic law to Israel. For any direct and full statement of this fact however as involving the temporary character and approaching termination of the Jewish theocracy, we are not to look in the early teachings of Christ. The Mosaic law was not as yet abolished; nor did Christ unnecessarily awaken Jewish prejudice and hostility against himself and his instructions, by asserting its speedy destruction. The time had not come for revealing to the Jews a fact so unwelcome and so incredible to them; nor did it come except in some intimation or obscure prediction, made necessary by circumstances, until after his crucifixion -- that great fact which was to furnish the decisive evidence of the abolition of the Mosaic law, and to render it even plausible or in the lowest degree credible to Jewish pride and prejudice. I shall only refer to some two or three declarations of Christ, in which, by intimations more or less distinct, he recognized the Mosaic law as a representative system, whose design or end was to be fully accomplished by his mission, and which, as a national system, was to be done away when its design should be thus accomplished. (Matt. v. 17, 18.) "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled" (____ _ ____ _). By "the law," must here be meant the Pentateuch, in which are included the covenant with Abraham and the Mosaic law. The meaning of the whole passage must be that which is applicable to the law of which he speaks, as well as to the prophets. So far as "the law" is concerned his meaning, in my view, is, that he came not to loosen, slacken, impair (____ _), the law spoken of, i.e., the Pentateuch in relation to its object or end either as a preceptive or sacrificial system; but (____ _), to fill it out or to complete it in this respect, and that not one iota shall pass from the law

till all is done which is necessary for this purpose. i.e., to accomplish the end of his mission. This last clause faintly implies that when all these things are done (_____), something may, if not shall, pass from the law, i.e., when the ulterior end of the law shall be fully accomplished or the law in this respect be filled out -- some change may or will take place in it. Now in respect to the Abrahamic covenant, all that remained to be done by Christ to give it completeness was, that He, the promised seed in whom all nations shall be blessed, should come, and teach, and do, and suffer, and die, as he did. What then did he do in respect to the complex system now called "the law?" He fully unfolded the nature of its two great requirements, the one as a rule of action, the other as a rule of judgment, and both in their high spiritual import: thus showing that as such requirements, whether viewed as pertaining to God's moral government over men as moral beings, or to his national government over Israel as citizens of the State, they were so far the same, that there was no true obedience to either short of spiritual obedience; and that no Pharisaic righteousness, no external conduct, being at best the mere criterion of political obedience and favor, could without the obedience of the heart, secure God's acceptance and favor as a moral governor. By thus fully unfolding the spiritual nature of the requirement of "the law" of which he speaks, he so far filled it out -- gave it its completeness while by correcting the grand Jewish error in respect to external doings, he gave still further completeness to the law in respect to its great object and end. But this is by no means all the things which should be accomplished -- _____ -- by the mission and work of Christ, in order to fill out, or give completeness to "the law." Christ by his great sacrifice for the sin of the world, was yet to supersede and cause to pass from the law spoken of -- the revelation of God as contained in the Pentateuch -- the Levitical offerings and sacrifices 'for the weaknesses and unprofitableness thereof.' 'For the law in these things made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh to God.' With the Levitical atonements must of course pass away the temporal sanctions of the national law, and with its sanctions also the national law itself, i.e., all the peculiar political or civil relations of God's revelation contained in the Pentateuch. Not one of these comparatively unimportant things -- nor even "one jot or tittle," was to pass from this part of revelation till this part itself was filled out, or completed, by the work of Christ. But when all that was essential to "the law" spoken of in respect to its great object and end, should be thus fully accomplished, then the

theocracy, i.e., the national law, meaning only the national or civil institution of the Pentateuch -- a mere appendage introduced four hundred and thirty years after the only true substantial reality, to represent this reality as the shadow does the substance, would pass away leaving the substance unobscured, complete, perfect, even effulgent in its own light. Thus Christ does not deny, but rather by his guarded and qualified language intimates, that such will be the issue of the work which he came to do.

7. (John, xviii. 33.) "Art thou the King of the Jews," &c. From this record of the interview between our Lord and Pilate (v. 28, sqq.), it appears that Jesus was accused by the Jews, and understood by Pilate to be accused as a malefactor against the civil law (v. 30, 31). When charged by Pilate on the ground of the representations made to him by the Jews, with claiming to be the King of the Jews, the important question I now raise is, what was our Lord's answer? He did not say in unqualified terms, 'I am the King of the Jews;' for this, according to the import of the question, would have been saying that he was the national King of the Jews, which was not true. Nor yet does he deny but rather implies, that in some sense or respect he was the King of the Jews. "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world" &c.; thus clearly implying that he had a kingdom and was in some respect a king. This implication led Pilate to ask again, "Art thou a king, then?" -- if thou art not as thou sayest a temporal prince or king, in what sense art thou a king? Jesus now answers explicitly and positively, that he was born and came into the world that he should bear witness to the truth, and all who are of the truth are his obedient subjects. He does not in express terms assert the abrogation of the Mosaic law as the design and effect of his mission. But he denies that he is the national King of the Jews, or of any other people (v. 36). And yet he most explicitly asserts his moral dominion over all men, Jews and Gentiles; and that in this respect therefore, he is the King of the Jews. Can it be supposable that Christ should thus declare, that for this end he was born, and for this cause he came into the world, to assume this absolute moral dominion over the Jewish nation as also over every other nation, without the fullest conviction and most distinct recognition in his own mind that the Jewish theocracy -- the Mosaic law -- was soon to pass away? Did not Christ know that when his work as a teacher of truth, or rather the whole work of his mission should be finished, as it was in his sacrifice on the cross, that

the national government given to Israel by Moses would come to its endits consummation -- and he himself should reign king in Zion, the sole King of Israel? And further still, did not the instructions which he gave to the Jews concerning himself as their Messiah, so disclose the design of his mission and the nature of his work as the sum and consummation of all God's previous revelations, and especially as superseding the Mosaic law, that denial or doubt was possible only to willful ignorance and perverseness?

8. (Luke, xxiv. 44,45.) "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures." In verse 27, we read, "And beginning at Moses," &c., "he explained unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." We learn from Acts, i. 3, that in this conversation our Lord spoke to his apostles "of the things concerning the kingdom of God." In the passage now cited we learn that he told them as he had done before, that all things written in the Pentateuch or law of Moses, as well as in the other Scriptures, concerning him, must be fulfilled; and that he explained what was written to their just apprehension. Of course, he must have taught them substantially, all which was written concerning him in the Pentateuch or law of Moses. He must have explained the first great promise of redemption (Gen. iii. 15), the nature and design of Abel's acceptable sacrifice, and of the sacrifices offered by Noah, and especially that of Abraham in offering Isaac; he must have unfolded the Abrahamic covenant with its promise to Abraham, 'in thy seed shall all nations be blessed,' together with that prediction concerning Shiloh (Gen. xlix. 10), so exactly and wonderfully accomplished in the final issue of intervening centuries with all their revolutions and changes. (Compare Deut. xviii. 8, and John, v. 46.) What is more directly to our present purpose, he must have developed with equal fullness the Jewish theocracy or national government of Israel -- the law given by Moses, in its nature, design, and end -- in all its prominent relations and characteristics, and of course, in accordance with the more explicit and full developments made by his apostles in their subsequent writings. The resurrection of Christ seems to have removed

all their lingering doubts of his Messiahship, and to have resulted in that docility of spirit, which with all the means that we have seen, they possessed as Jews, of understanding the grand, ulterior, though indirect design of their national government, would render them apt scholars under his present instructions. Nor can it be reasonably doubted, that in the conversations which he had with them during the forty days between his resurrection and ascension, in which he so instructed them from their own Scriptures, he gave to them some just and adequate comprehension of the import of these writings. It was evidently from this source that he drew his instructions as we may say, exclusively, "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts, i. 3), and saying when opening their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures, "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer" (Luke, xxiv. 45, 46). They seem indeed, probably from his direction to them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the promise (in John, xvi. 8), to have inferred that the entire Jewish nation would receive him as their Messiah, shake off the Roman yoke, and perhaps suddenly rise to universal dominion. To their inquiry on this subject, our Lord's answer (v. 7) clearly intimates that substantially but not circumstantially, what they spoke of should come to pass -- even a kingdom for Israel. It was not indeed, to come to pass immediately, nor for them to know the times and seasons which the Father had reserved to himself for the accomplishment of his great design, to give them as he had said, the kingdom. But this was to be accomplished in a way suited to its own nature, not as a temporal but as a moral or spiritual kingdom; for he assured them that they were to receive power in respect to the setting up and establishment of this kingdom, after the Holy Ghost should qualify them for their work, as witnesses for him, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. How strikingly adapted was this answer to correct their circumstantial and imaginary mistakes, and to exhibit to their minds just views of the symbolical and evanescent characteristic of their national law, and of the spiritual nature as well as of the permanent and universal extension of the kingdom of their Messiah! Compare Luke, ii.30 sqq.; Luke, xxiii. 43; John, iv. 25, as showing that, to a limited extent, just views on this subject actually existed; and also Luke, xvii. 20, 21, and John, xviii. 36-38, showing that Christ actually approved and justified these views.

I only add on this particular part of the subject, that Christ in his personal instructions, not only never taught that the national law of the Jews was in any respect a moral institution, or sustained any moral relation to that people whatsoever; but, on the contrary, always implied, in what he said of it, that it was not a moral, but a merely positive institution. Proceeding on this assumption, he ever distinguished it from, and contrasted it with God's moral system; and thus as a teacher of true religious ethics, he ever presented himself as inculcating spiritual morality -- the religion of the heart. In proof of this, it is quite sufficient to read the severe and even terrible rebukes which he administered to the scribes and Pharisees: while conceding without qualification, that they outwardly appeared righteous to men, he at the same time charged them with being full of hypocrisy and iniquity. If he spoke of the obligation to tithe mint, anise, and cummin, or of the external acts of judgment, mercy, and faith, it was not of the moral obligation, as implying their moral quality, but merely their fitness or rightness to the particular ends of such action. Or if he reproved for the omission or commission of external doings, it was not for their moral quality, but simply as proof of the morally wrong or the want of the morally right state of the heart. (Vide Matt. xxiii. 1-33.) He never approved or commended in a moral regard, any subordinate action as such, nor only as a complex act involving morally right principle; nor disapproved or condemned subordinate action as such nor only as a complex act involving morally wrong principle. He always, and in all things, inculcated morally right principle, and condemned the want of it as involving the morally wrong principle. How remote was such a standard of morals from that of the scribes and Pharisees, and of the people generally, whom he instructed! How fitted to show them that unless their righteousness consisted of something more than the mere criterion of obedience to their national law, they could in no case meet with God's acceptance as a moral governor; that through the perversion of their national law, they defeated its ulterior and grand design in their moral reformation, and hence it was important and probable that the national system thus perverted and abused, was to be displaced by that spiritual kingdom or reign of God, which he as their Messiah so plainly taught, that he came into the world to establish!

LECTURE VI: THE MOSAIC LAW A THEOCRACY.

The views of Paul in respect to this system. -- The premises from which he argued familiar to him and to the Jews: Rom. i. 17, 18; ii. 1, 2; R. 20; iii. 21; vii. 3-6; Gal. iii. 16, sqq.; Eph. ii. 15; Col. ii. 14 -- The Epistle to the Hebrews.

HAVING attempted to show by various considerations, that the Mosaic law was a theocracy, I propose also to unfold the views of the apostle Paul on the subject.

We shall see if I mistake not, that the apostle, as a Jew reasoning with Jews, derived his great, not to say all his arguments, in support of the doctrine of one common method or way of justification before God for all men -- in support of the Gospel in its great and essential truths, or God's moral government through grace over this sinful world -- from the great facts of the Jewish theocracy or the law given by Moses, in connection with other known and familiar facts of the Jewish revelation. We shall further see that he derived them from the same great facts from which, as I claim to have shown in the preceding discussion, the Jews, from the beginning to the end of their theocracy, ought to have derived the same, and would, aside from their almost incredible perverseness, their idolatrous degradation and stolidity, have actually derived them, and so have come to the same momentous conclusions with the apostle,

If these things shall appear from the epistles of Paul, then it will also be seen, not only what abundant instruction God furnished to men in the earliest ages of the world, especially by the Abrahamic covenant, but how this instruction, without withdrawing one ray of the light of revealed truth already given, was signally and impressively augmented by that theocracy in which God became the national king and tutelary deity of Israel. We shall further see how the great apostle of the Gentiles, in fully unfolding by revelation God's system for the salvation of a lost world, relied not on any merely legal system and its principles, but on a system modified by grace. Since man's apostasy in Eden there had been no such law, either moral or political, not even in any heathen nation. Nor of

course did the apostle reason as theologians have commonly done, on the assumption that any of our race, much less that all of them are finally condemned for sin as the transgression of law as distinguished from unbelief. Nor yet, for the accomplishment of his purpose, did he rely simply, nor even chiefly, on his authority as an inspired teacher, but on the Jewish theocracy and the known facts of the Jewish revelation. As Luke tells us (Acts, xvii. 2, 3), "Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them (the Jews), and three Sabbath-days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging (_____), fully evincing) that Christ must needs have suffered," &c. This mode of reasoning was, on this occasion, in a degree successful, as it was, after the close of the apostle's labors, eminently triumphant. Judaism and Christianity, in the time of this apostle, were in active conflict. A crisis had come in which one or the other must triumph. And now in the Jewish theocracy itself (with an occasional, and for some subsidiary purposes, a necessary reliance on the light of nature), our apostle finds his chief citadel of defense against every assault on the truth by Jewish ingenuity. From this also he takes his brightest armor and most effective weapons of onset on Jewish error and perverseness, even almost his whole equipment for victory in that conflict, which was to overthrow Judaism and to subdue all nations to the obedience of faith.

I cannot here pretend to refer to all the proofs and illustrations of the view now given which are contained in the writings of this apostle, but only to some of them, which must, I think, be satisfactory to any one who will even slightly examine the subject. Indeed, I shall confine myself chiefly to those facts respecting the Mosaic law to which I have before; referred, as these are employed by the apostle in his reasonings with Jews, especially as these will show that the Jews had the same means of coming, and were therefore bound to have come, to the same great conclusion respecting justification with the apostle. And here it may be well briefly to advert to some instances in which the apostle makes a simple appeal to the authority of the Old Testament in support of his doctrine. In some of these, it is true, he appeals to the later prophets; but then not on the hypothesis that a later and new revelation of the doctrine was made to them, as many are apt to suppose. For there is not only no intimation of such a fact, but as we shall see, he appeals to the

Pentateuch and even to the decalogue, which shows that he did not consider the later prophets as acquiring new knowledge on the subject by any, new and special revelation made to them, but only by more justly interpreting and more fully understanding the revelation by Moses.

(Rom. i. 17.) "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," &c. Here he affirms that "the Gospel is the power of God to salvation, &c. -- to the Jew first." How to the Jew first? Plainly as first revealed to Jews not by the preaching of Christ, but in their own Scriptures; for he adds that therein, i.e., in the Gospel, "the righteousness of God by faith -- the ground of justification by faith (____), which is of God's providing, is revealed (____) to faith, as it is written, The righteous by faith (____) shall live." Here then, in the beginning of this epistle, he affirms the fact by no means unimportant to his purpose, that the Gospel was first revealed to the Jews in their own Scriptures.

(Verse 18.) "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Here the kind of revelation spoken of is evidently the same as that in v. 17. The revelation of the one fact (v. 17) is based on the revelation of the other (v. 18). The revelation of the truth spoken of in the New Testament is, for the most part, supernatural revelation. Thus, the apostle not only asserts that the doctrine of justification by faith, now fully revealed in the Gospel, was first taught the Jew in his revelation, but also that the wrath of God was revealed in the same as the original basis for the doctrine of gratuitous justification.

By "the wrath of God revealed from heaven," we are not to understand temporal death, for to this, simply as such, the righteous by faith were hopelessly doomed (Gen. iii. 19). Indeed, to them it is "gain" (Phil. i. 21). But the wrath spoken of is the penalty of sin -- the full expression of God's anger against sin -- that eternal death which is the wages of sin (chap. vi. 23). This is the wrath of God, revealed in the Jewish Scriptures and in the Gospel, "against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," of all men "who (as a universal characteristic of determined sin, John, iii.

20) hold the truth in unrighteousness." The meaning plainly is, that they know the truth sufficiently as the basis of moral responsibility, but practically disregard it. Refusing reflection, they practically place the truth known in utter abeyance. Shutting away from the mind the full discernment of the practical relations of truth because they dislike them, they thus yield themselves to the control of their selfish and sordid inclinations with as little disturbance as may be, fostering their mental quiet by such false speculations, groundless convictions, and vain hopes, as only evince their willful ignorance as opposed to thorough reflective knowledge, and their mad desperation in sin. I need not say how explicitly this meaning of _____ is shown in the following context. Thus the apostle, that he may convince the Jews of the clear manifestation in their own revelation of God's wrath toward the wickedness -- of all mankind (vide his proofs derived from the Scriptures, chap. iii. 10, sqq.), proceeds to confirm the fact in that respect in which Jews might question or deny it (viz., in respect to Gentiles), by appealing to such flagrant and notorious wickedness on their part as no Jew could deny, and which rendered them worthy of the wrath which the Scriptures revealed in common against all, both Jews and Gentiles. With this digression, it is still apparent that he makes the Scriptures, God's revelation, the ulterior ground of his argument in placing Jews and Gentiles on a common level, as sinners justly exposed to the wrath of God.

(Rom. ii. 1, 2.) "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure," &c.

We shall now see how the apostle in this verse, and in the following context to v. 17, continues his appeal to the Jewish revelation, in support of his views and principles concerning the final judgment.

In the passage now under consideration, his reliance on this revelation for his argument is obvious. As if he said, If the Gentiles under the light of nature are as you judge them to be in view of their flagrant wickedness

wholly inexcusable and worthy of death the penalty of sin, you cannot be less so under your own revelation from God. In judging them therefore, you condemn yourselves; for you do the same things. You must therefore, in your view, be under the curse of your own law. To enforce the argument he adds, 'And we know that the sentence of God, in accordance with this law, is according to truth upon them which commit such things.' Thus the apostle, in this argument with Jews respecting the final judgment, appeals to and relies on their own revelation. And to place this view of his argument beyond all doubt, he distinguishes (v. 3) their common judgment of the Gentiles and of themselves from the sentence of God. As if he had said, If you cannot escape your own judgment of self-condemnation, how can you escape "the sentence of God?" He then proceeds (v. 4, sqq.) to expostulate with them for the vain and presumptuous thought, that those thus exposed to this sentence of God at the final judgment, should escape it, while despising the only hope of so doing, furnished by the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, "not knowing," &c. -- should thus go on treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God who will render to every man according to his deeds' -- good, in perfect and eternal blessedness to them that do good, and evil, as the full expression of his wrath for sin, to them that do evil. Thus then the apostle unfolds and affirms in this argument with the Jews, on the authority of their own revelation, the fact of the last judgment with its great and eternal issues.

On the same authority he still proceeds in his reasoning, still showing that his argument is a Jewish argument. In v. 11 he asserts the absolute impartiality and perfect justice of God in his treatment of sinners whether Jews or Gentiles, according to the great principle of judgment already specified (v. 6). In verses 12, 13, he still recognizes the same rule of judgment, affirming that as many as have sinned (i. e., shall be found on the day of account to be sinners as distinguished from saints) without a revelation, shall perish without a revelation; and as many as shall be found on that day to be sinners in the same sense (for such only can be the true meaning of his language), under revelation, shall be judged (condemned) by revelation. He then adds, in obvious rebuke of the Jews, and giving greater precision and particularity to his meaning, to convince

them of their entire practical deficiency, that "not the hearers of the law (____) are just before God, but the doers of the law (____) shall be justified." By "the doers of the law" he must mean those described in verses 1 and 10 (vide James, i. 21, 22), i.e., he must mean those who obey the revealed rule of judgment. He can mean no other, especially in view of the absolute form of his language, "shall be justified." By thus using the article in this verse, he shuts the word law down to a particularity of meaning which it had not in v. 12, and thus administers a most pointed rebuke to the Jews for their entire disobedience to their own law. And now as he proceeds, he still presents the same authority of revelation as the only rule of judgment for all men. Thus in verses 14, 15, by asserting that when the Gentiles do by nature substantially the same things to obtain acceptance with God which are required by revelation, they show that substantially the same rule of judgment is written on their hearts -- he says in other words, that they know substantially the same "work" to be necessary to justification before God, which is required for this purpose by the Jewish law. Thus the apostle again shows his Jewish readers contrary to their preconceived opinion respecting Gentiles, that there is but one and the same rule of judgment for all men, viz., that which is prescribed on the authority of their own revelation.

But I now come to the main question: What warrant had the apostle thus to derive his argument from the Jewish revelation, and what reason had the Jews to admit its conclusiveness? The manner of the apostle shows that he had no suspicion that the validity of his reasoning would be questioned, nor indeed was it -- at least there was no question raised respecting its validity. But had the Jewish revelation -- either the Abrahamic covenant or the national law given by Moses -- in plain and express terms presented or authorized this view of the final judgment? This will not be pretended. What warrant then had the apostle for this argument from the Jewish revelation, for requiring or even expecting the Jews to receive it? Is it said that this knowledge of that revelation was now for the first time imparted to Paul by a new and special revelation to him? Be it so. Then the force of his argument depended wholly on the fact that such new revelation was made to him, and on his own authority as an inspired teacher, and not at all, even in the slightest degree, on the

Jewish revelation as made to the Jews. How preposterous! He reasons ex concessis, from what had not been conceded. He reasons from a fact as made known to those with whom he reasons, when it had only now been made known for the first time to himself! His argument therefore for aught that appears, was entirely groundless and illusory -- one which he had no warrant to make, and the Jews no warrant to receive. And yet he makes it, as if, when plainly presented to popular conviction and consideration, it would not and could not be questioned. What then shall we say -- what can be said -- to vindicate the apostle in this mode of reasoning? What, except that the revelation made to the Jews, especially that part of it which consisted of their national law -- their law given by Moses -- was a REPRESENTATIVE SYSTEM of government, as already explained, a fact which, though speculatively and practically overlooked and disregarded by the Jewish nation, was still so well known to any one who would honestly reflect on their own history, that it need but to be stated to shut off denial, and actually to convince and silence every adversary. Who in view of the apostle's reasoning, can, notwithstanding all the perverseness, and error, and suppression of the truth on the part of the Jews, entertain a doubt that the Jewish theocracy was a symbolical system of government, divinely designed and adapted to unfold God's moral government over men through grace, in its nature, mode, progress of administration, its principles of adjudication, and also in its final issues on the judgment-day?

(Rom. ii. 20.) "An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law" (____ _). In this verse the apostle, in my view, expressly asserts that characteristic of the law which I maintain. In v. 17 he says, "Behold thou art called a Jew" -- one having that revelation from God which we call the national law, given to Israel by Moses. I claim the word _____ is used by the apostle in verses 17, 18, 20, to denote this national law. The question now is, what is the meaning of the apostle's assertion that the proud and boasting Jew has _____; _____? The word _____ denotes an image -- a representation; in one connection it denotes semblance without that which is real (2 Tim. iii. 5), and in another a correct representation of what is real, as the verb in Gal. iv. 19. Now it cannot be supposed, that the pride and boasting of the Jew respected

what he himself regarded as the mere semblance of knowledge and of the truth, and still less that the apostle meant to say that the Jew in the law which God had given him, possessed nothing but a mere semblance of what was not real. What then can be the meaning of the apostle, except that the Jew, in the national law which God had given him, possessed the correct representation of knowledge and of the truth on the great subject of God's moral government, of which the apostle was treating. This meaning not only accords with what, as we have seen, the apostle had before assumed as the characteristic of this law, but gives great point and force to his rebuke of the Jew for his vain boasting and formality in respect to true religion and morality. As if he said, You claim to be superior to all others because you are a Jew; to be their guide, instructor, teacher, because God has given you your national law, regarding this merely representative system as imparting all truth which need be known, demanding a mere ritual service as constituting on your own part and on the part of others, the substance of all virtue and true religion even that righteousness of law which commends you to God's everlasting favor and friendship. And what is the practical effect of all this pretension and pride? Just what is to be expected. You who teach another, teach not yourself. You who preach that a man should not steal, steal yourself. You who say a man should not commit adultery, yourself commit adultery. Thus by perversely overlooking the representative character of your national law and the moral system represented by it, you rest on what you consider a complete legal righteousness while breaking your own law, dishonoring God, and even causing his name to be blasphemed among the Gentiles (verses 23, 24). Thus the apostle, in this part of his argument, is led expressly to assert the representative, character of the national law given by Moses, that he may the more fully expose Jewish error by showing its origin in mistaken and false views of this law. In confirmation of this view of his course of thought, he pursues the same in the following part of the chapter, passing from the decalogue to circumcision -- telling the Jews, for the correction of their error, what circumcision is in its essential nature; what it is in substance instead of the shadow, i.e., what it represents, this being all that it is of any real moment, viz., the circumcision of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not from men but from God. The represented reality of which it is the sign or seal is "the righteousness of faith" (Rom. iv. 11). Thus the apostle as it were, constantly establishes the truth of his great doctrine of justification by faith in the sight of God on the final day,

by appealing to acknowledged Jewish authority -- to the law given by Moses.

I might greatly multiply these general forms of proof, that the apostle rested his great argument for the reading doctrine of this epistle on what he calls _ _____ national law of the Jews, or rather its requirement for justification, as representing God's rule of judgment under his higher system of moral government. (Vide Rom. iii. 2 and 7; iii. 21; iv. 6; vii. 1, sqq.; ix. 33; x. 11; xi. 25.) I deem it necessary here only to ask what force or even plausibility, can pertain to this argument, unless this national law was in truth designed by God, its author, to be a representative system, and ought therefore ever to have been regarded by the Jews as such; and therefore, When justly interpreted in Connection with the great and familiar facts of their own history, as being in its pre-eminent characteristic an exhibition of God's higher system of moral government through grace -- the Gospel -- the covenant made with Abraham. Thus, while there is no pretense that the Mosaic law, directly or expressly, taught any thing on the subject of man's justification before God, the apostle in this epistle to the Romans, compelled the Jews to see and know (what some of the later prophets substantially saw and knew from the same source) that their own national law, the theocracy of Israel, indirectly, but very clearly and impressively, taught the same great doctrine of justification before God -- the same Gospel which he preached.

I shall now, in accordance with what I have said in introducing the present argument, proceed to show in what manner Paul used the national law or theocracy of Israel, and particularly its recent origin, its temporary duration, its representative character, its design, and other striking peculiarities of it as a national system, to establish the truth and unfold the import of the Gospel which he so triumphantly defended and maintained.

The first of a particular class of passages to which I refer, is Rom. iii. 21: 'But now the righteousness of God without law is manifested, being

witnessed by the law and the prophets.' This is one of the most striking and decisive passages in which the apostle places in the strongest light, the ground of justification of God's providing -- without law (____), without legal righteousness, in opposition to the ground of a legal justification. (Compare v.20 and context.) But he expressly asserts generally, that this righteousness of God without law, which is wholly of God's providing, is witnessed by the law (____ and the prophets; but the logical connection in v. 25, sqq. -- his language being taken from the Jewish ritual and applied to Christ -- shows that he considered, and meant his readers should believe, that that part of the Jewish revelation, or of the Mosaic law, which ordained liberty by a ransom, and by a mercy-seat or propitiatory sacrifice, revealed or taught in some mode -- witnessed -- the righteousness of God by faith as the ground of man's justification before God. But how could the apostle say, or Jews be authorized to believe, that this particular part of the Mosaic or national law revealed this doctrine of the righteousness of God by faith, unless they viewed, and were authorized to view, this national law as a representative system? Every one must see how exclusively the apostle derives his doctrine of justification by faith, without deeds of law, from the Mosaic law; not indeed a national justification which is all that as a national law it could give or directly teach, but a justification before God for men as moral beings; for it is by proving the latter, and surely not by proving the former, that he infers (v. 29) that he is not the "God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also." The apostle has derived the doctrine not merely from the law and the prophets, but from that part of revelation called the Mosaic law -- the civil or national law of Israel, even from the ritual or ceremonial part of it -- by which God instituted propitiatory offerings or sacrifices for national sin. In no other meaning could an honest Jew understand the passage, Rom. vii. 3, 4, 5, 6. It is undeniable that what he calls the law (____), in vs. 4, 5, 6 is the Mosaic law, or national law, which God gave to Israel, for there was no other law which the apostle could have called the law, (____), and have said that the Jews were freed from it, as the woman is freed from the law of her husband when he is dead, or that they had become dead to it by the body of Christ, or that the motions of sins by it did work in our members to bring forth sin unto death, or that the Jews were delivered from it as a dead law. What can be made of this language of the apostle, if he did not mean that the Mosaic law was a temporary institution which had now come to its end? How did he know this in respect to this law? In words,

its author had not given it this character in the Old Testament. How then could the apostle know what he affirms of it to be true, unless he knew it to be anational law -- a theocracy -- and as such, a representative system now dead, or done away by the accomplishment of what it represented?

I might advert, in confirmation of the present view of the Mosaic law, to other passages in this epistle. I propose, however, to consider some of the prominent, and to me peculiarly forcible passages on the subject in some other epistles of the same apostle.

(Gal. iii. 16, to the end of the chapter.) -- "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made," &c. Without fully commenting on this passage, I deem it sufficient to say, that the apostle clearly teaches the following important truths: that the covenant made with Abraham was the Gospel (v. 8); that it contained the promises of all the real good which God, since the apostasy, has ever made or could make to man (Rom. viii. 28, 31, 32; 1 Cor. iii. 21, 23); that these promises (what the apostle so often and emphatically calls "the promise" and "the promises") were not made directly, but only indirectly or representatively, by the Mosaic law, and were made to none as binding to their actual fulfillment or the conferring of one real blessing, except to Christ and to those who as being Christ's by faith, were Abraham's seed (vs. 28, 29), so that God never promised, either in the Abrahamic covenant or in the Mosaic law, that he would not cast out of his favor, at any moment, the natural as distinguished from the spiritual seed of Abraham; and further, that the covenant made with Abraham was no other than the perfect moral government of God, established and administered over all men in every essential respect, being substantially what the apostle calls it, the Gospel; that this perfect moral government, this institution (_____), which was before confirmed of God in Christ, the Mosaic law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, must have left unchanged in its full force and absolute perfection, and that this law was not added as a part of the Abrahamic covenant, but was introduced because of transgressions, as a temporary appendage, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made. Can it then be supposed that what the apostle calls "the law" was an essential part, or even any part, of God's moral government over men as moral beings?

Did this law in any respect change this unchangeable and perfect system, either by taking any thing from it, or adding any thing to it? Did God, after having given Israel a perfect moral government through grace, change this government, by giving them, several hundred years afterwards a civil government? The chief, not to say the only direct reason for giving them this national government, was according to the apostle, because of transgression; that is, the object was to restrain idolatry as an overt crime with other overt crimes and abominations resulting from it, which in their prevalence and influence had become fatal to the moral reformation of this people. By this method idolatry was made a civil offense, even treason, against the national king of Israel. It thus became punishable, and was actually punished, as some other overt crimes were, simply as a civil offense, with temporal death as a civil penalty. Such a law, or any number of such laws, could no more add aught to, or take aught from, God's perfect moral government over men as moral beings, than could a similar law with a civil penalty enacted by this State against intemperance or theft, change God's moral government over us as moral beings. Whatever direct, useful effects to the State might then be aimed at or accomplished by the Mosaic law, or whatever indirect useful effects preparatory to bringing the idolatrous people to submit with the heart to the moral government of God, still God's perfect system of moral government through grace, confirmed before of God in Christ, in its perfect rule of action, in its rule of judgment, in all its particular moral precepts, in all its exceeding great and precious promises, and in its fearful penalty, remained unchangeable and unchanged in its glory.

In the 23d verse and onward, the apostle unfolds a further but an indirect design of the Mosaic law, with the reason of its continuance until the way of justification by faith should be more fully revealed. This design was, that as a schoolmaster, a conductor of children, it might bring the Jewish nation to Christ, to be justified not by the law but by faith. He then asserts that after faith is come, after this full revelation is made, the Jews are no longer under a schoolmaster. Thus the Mosaic law -- the law which was four hundred and thirty years after the covenant made with Abraham -- wholly ceased on the full introduction of the Gospel. Nor was this law, as many have supposed, the ceremonial or ritual part of the law. It was the

whole law given by Moses, after the lapse of the four hundred and thirty years specified by the apostle. It was the Mosaic law, the entire national law of the Jews, or the Jewish theocracy. It was this as distinguished from that everlasting covenant which God made with Abraham, or from that system of moral government which God administers through Christ, under an economy of grace over all men. It was that covenant which God made with the fathers, when he took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they kept not the better covenant which was established on better promises. It was that covenant which, instead of being faultless and so superseding the better covenant, was in no substantial respect according to, but essentially diverse from that better covenant, and which God by his prophet promised not to make, but to finish or complete with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, in writing his laws in their hearts, and remembering their sins and iniquities no more. But the Mosaic law contained no promise, and revealed no purpose of renewing or sanctifying grace, nor contained the least provision or ground for the forgiveness of the sin of the heart. In respect to sin in this high sense, whatever provisions it made for the sanctifying of the flesh or the pardon of civil offenses, it left the perfect law of God's moral government over men as the true and only criterion of such sin, and as both a rule of action and also of judgment in its full force and application, without one ray of hope of deliverance for the transgressor from its fearful and endless penalty. It had revealed God's abundant mercy for the penitent transgressor of its rule of action as a national or civil system, while it revealed nothing of God in his high relation of the moral governor of men, except as a representative system. However momentous, clear, abundant, convincing, were its instructions to every unperverted mind in its representative character, it was as a national system, utterly barren of all instruction in respect to the higher relations between man and his Maker. It could not give eternal life in this respect it was weak and profitless; it could not make him who performed its services perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; it was preeminently, not to say only, a system of positive institutions (_____); it was imposed only until the time of reformation, it therefore waxed old, decayed, and vanished away.

Eph. ii. 15, next claims consideration. "Having abolished in his flesh the

enmity, even the law of commandments in ordinances." Here the question to be answered is, what is the law of commandments in ordinances (____ _)? As a somewhat general answer to this inquiry, I should say that the apostle means "the revealed law of requirements in positive precepts." I have already said enough to show what I mean by positive precepts, especially as they are in a peculiar respect arbitrary, circumstantial, and changeable. Nor do I suppose there is any room for the question according to New Testament usage, whether such is the meaning of the word _____ in the present case. To this so far as I know, respectable commentators assent. But another question arises on which they are not so well agreed, viz., what are the requirements or commandments of the Mosaic law, or of the Jewish theocracy or national government of Israel, which are positive in distinction from moral? I answer, each and all so far forth as they were national or civil requirements, or sustained this relation. Even what our Saviour calls the first and great commandment of the law, and the second which he says is like unto it, and also that requirement of repentance or faith which was the rule of judgment, were as truly civil or National requirements as any other. I do not say that they were nothing more. I simply affirm that they were requirements of the national law of Israel -- principles sustaining civil relations, depending solely as such on the relation of God as their national king. If it here be said that these rules of action and many others, e. g., those of the decalogue, were in their very nature moral requirements -- I admit and maintain most strenuously that they were moral requirements in their very nature, as their nature was related to men as moral beings. At the same time I also maintain that they were civil or national requirements, given by God as the national king of Israel, and this in their very nature as they related to that people as subjects of his civil government. They were civil requirements in their very nature in respect to that people, when given by God as their national king, though they are not and never have been such in respect to any other people -- as much civil requirements in one relation of their nature, as they were moral requirements in another relation of their nature. But as civil or national requirements, given by God to the people of Israel, they were positive requirements, arbitrary, circumstantial, changeable, as changeable circumstances may change. Thus the whole Mosaic law or Jewish theocracy or national law of Israel, was, as such, a revealed system of requirements, consisting of _____. It was _____, a revealed system, which in its requirements

consisted wholly of positive precepts. This view of the apostle's meaning appears to be decisively established by the logical connection. In the preceding verses (13, 14), the apostle tells the Gentile converts at Ephesus, that "now in Christ Jesus ye who were once far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ; for he is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;" and proceeds thus (v. 15), 'having abolished in (by means of) his flesh the law of commandments, consisting of positive requirements.' Now can there be a doubt that the Mosaic law, as the national law of the Jews, was that which separated them from all other nations? What else made the people of Israel so peculiarly and exclusively as they were, the people of God? Were not the moral law of God as a perfect rule of action, and the covenant with Abraham, the Gospel as the rule of final judgment, common alike to both Jews and Gentiles? Was there nothing in the Mosaic law but its ordinances respecting rites and ceremonies, by which it distinguished and separated Jews and Gentiles? What then were the municipal requirements of this system, every one of which, as resting on every Israelite, required of him what it did not require of any other human being -- a spirit of loyalty to the true God as a national ruler -- and was enforced on him as it was not on any other human being and never has been, through a civil process by sanctions of temporal good and evil? Plainly it was the Mosaic law -- this law of the Jewish theocracy as a national or civil law which was the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, which absolutely shut off the latter from all its immunities, its peculiar obligations, its worship of God as the tutelary deity of Israel in the temple at Jerusalem, its promises of national prosperity by his miraculous providence, its reflected light as revealing God's higher system of law and grace for men, as moral and immortal beings -- this law, this national law given to Israel as a single nation, so necessary to introduce into even one small spot of earth the knowledge of the true God, and gradually to unveil his glories as the God of grace and salvation to a lost world, was that wall of partition rising as it were to heaven between Jews and Gentiles -- this national law of commandments, consisting as such simply of positive, i.e., of arbitrary and circumstantial, requirements, Christ by his atoning sacrifice has abolished, that he might make in himself of twain one new man, and reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross.

(Col. ii. 14.) "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances (_____) that war against us, which was contrary to us, and taken it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." So far as the mere words of this passage are concerned, I deem it quite unnecessary, after what I have said on Eph. ii. 15, to show that the apostle here asserts that the Mosaic law -- the hand-writing graven on the tables of stone included -- is blotted out, taken away (_____), from between Jews and Gentiles. The interpretation of this text now given is confirmed especially by the following context. To spoil (_____), is to take spoil as from a conquered enemy, or divest thoroughly. To make a show openly (_____), is to expose to just reproach. The question now is, who are the _____, _____, the rulers and authorities? Plainly those who, by defending the Jewish institutions -- the Mosaic law -- of which the apostle is speaking, had chiefly hindered the progress of Christianity. Christ, by his death, resurrection, and ascension, effectually baffled the designs and overthrew the power of the Jewish rulers and priests, and publicly exposed these enemies of true religion to the reproach they merited, in the triumphs of the Gospel. In view of these facts -- the blotting out of the hand-writing in ordinances, and the full and complete victory of Christ over its powerful and malignant defenders -- the apostle derives his practical inference (v. 16), "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect to a festival, or of a new moon, or of Sabbaths." Can we then suppose the apostle to exclude from what he calls the _____ the hand-writing on the two tables of stone -- i. e., the decalogue or ten commandments -- the handwriting so emphatically called, being written by the very finger of God? Especially, can we suppose this when he has so explicitly asserted that these commandments are done away (2 Cor. iii. 11, 13) -- a fact which had been wholly impossible had they not been positive requirements -- and when also he calls the whole Mosaic law (Eph. ii. 15) the law of commandments (_____), in positive requirements? What can be more obvious than that the apostle thought of the same subject in these three cases the Mosaic law, conceived of it as a national system of positive requirements, and as such done away in the coming and work of Christ? But it may be asked why, in this 16th verse, did he not say, Let no man judge you in respect to any part of this abolished law, instead of forbidding such judgments in respect to mere ritual service, as meats, drinks, &c.? I answer, because in respect to keeping the ten commandments there were none among the Judaizers to cast the first

stone, or to complain of such delinquencies on the part of those to whom the apostle wrote. These Judaizers counted nothing delinquency in respect to the Mosaic law, except failure in ritual services. No other proscription of uncharitable judgment by the apostle, therefore, was called for, or could be even pertinent to the case. But it may be further said, that the apostle extends his prohibition beyond mere ritual services, as meats, drinks, festivals, and new moons, by the specification of Sabbaths, which shows that he had respect to the fourth commandment of the decalogue. But to this it may be replied, that there were other Sabbaths besides that of the fourth commandment, which were as truly merely ritual, festival days, as were the new moons and the others specified by the apostle; and we may suppose that these were the only Sabbaths in respect to which the Colossians were, for their non-observance, liable to censure from the Judaizers -- so the apostle neither spoke of nor meant any other. The connection shows a much higher probability of this than that the apostle here includes under this term, that Sabbath which was not Jewish in its origin, but instituted when the work of creation was finished. Indeed, when the fact of such an institution is once admitted in respect to a Sabbath, it is incredible that Paul should refer to it in this passage, and place it on the same level with these merely Jewish ritual observances which were to perish with the using. Besides, let it be supposed that the apostle did refer to the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, so as actually to include, under the word sabbaths, the particular Sabbath in some respect, and that he says in respect to, this precept what implies its abolition, and that Christians are not therefore to be judged or censured in respect to the non-observance of this Sabbath. What did, or could he mean? This is shown at once by the preceding context. For he was speaking only, as we have seen, of the dogmas -- the _____ -- the positive precepts of the Mosaic law, or of the law of the Jews. In saying then what he is now supposed to say, he must be understood to mean, at most, that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment considered as a positive precept of the civil law of the Jews, was abolished with its other _____, and that therefore no man was to be censured or judged for not considering it as still in force in this character. He might have said the same thing of every other particular command of the decalogue (a fact involved in what he said generally concerning this civil law in v. 14, as also in 2 Cor. iii. 11, and Eph. ii. 15), had the same occasion occurred, or the same reason existed, in respect to any other particular command, which led him to say it in respect to this

particular command. The time had come, when what was peculiarly Jewish in this command, e. g., the observance of the seventh day of the week, was no longer binding. This, at least in respect to the seventh day, was shown by the practice of the apostles and other Christians. The Judaizers at Colosse, therefore, would of course falsely insist that this was a plain and inexcusable violation of the Mosaic law, and Paul would of course be led to expose the error on the ground he had taken in v. 14, viz., that this law "was blotted out and taken away." This would be merely putting an end to the civil obligation to observe the Sabbath -- a day of holy rest -- which could no more lessen the moral obligation to observe it, than the same thing could lessen the moral obligation to obey the fifth or any other command of the decalogue, the moral obligation of no one of which can depend, nor ever did depend in the slightest degree on the Jewish civil law. On the question whether the fourth commandment is what is properly and truly called a moral precept, I shall only say, that in my view it can be shown as decisively to be such, by showing what is properly called its universal tendency, utility, and necessity to man's highest well-being, or to be the dictate of true virtuous benevolence, in the universal circumstances and condition of men, as can be any other moral precept by the only mode of showing it to be such.

I shall here briefly notice some remarks of McKnight in his notes on v. 14. He says, "that though these precepts (the decalogue) are all founded in the nature and reason of things, they are with sufficient propriety called _____, an appellation which denotes precepts founded in the mere will of the lawgiver, because the penalty of death, with which they were sanctioned, depended on the will of God." It is plain that McKnight did not distinctly apprehend the very distinction, which he so justly states, between what have been called moral and positive precepts. For if these precepts of the decalogue "are founded in the nature and reason of things," and if this is the only nature or character of these precepts, then they are not "founded in the mere will of the lawgiver;" for such precepts, as we have seen, are circumstantial and changeable as circumstances change, while the former are immutable in all circumstances. Now, are these precepts moral only, or positive only, or are they in different relations? Both -- plainly both. They are in their nature moral, contemplated in their relation to men as moral beings, and they are

positive in their nature, contemplated in their relation to the people of Israel as subjects of God's civil government, or as citizens under a theocracy. In their former relative nature (for we have nothing to do with absolute nature, as strictly distinguished from relative) they are moral; in their latter relative nature they are positive. As such, they derive all their authority from the will of the lawgiver in the peculiar circumstances in which they were given, and when these circumstances changed, they have been blotted out taken out of the way, so removing an otherwise insurmountable obstacle to the union of Jews and Gentiles in one body in Christ. Notwithstanding the error of McKnight in respect to the true distinction between the two characteristics of the precepts of the decalogue, a distinction in respect to which the minds of many other interpreters and theologians have been as confused as his, he was still compelled to adopt the true meaning of the apostle's language. He says: "It is evident that the law of Moses, in all its parts, is abolished and taken away. Consequently, that Christians are under no obligation to obey even the moral precepts of that law, on account of their having been delivered to the Jews by Moses." Is it not strange that others should not see this as well as Dr. McKnight? For what is more undeniable than that these moral precepts were binding on all men as moral beings, with the full authority of God as their moral governor before the giving of the Mosaic law -- an authority which could not be increased by a merely civil law given to Israel, nor diminished by the abolition of that law. We come next to --

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

After all that the apostle had written on the subject in his epistles, especially in those to the Romans and Galatians, most of the Jews still adhered to the Mosaic law with perverse obstinacy, while such were the plausible reasonings of the Judaizing teachers, as not only to prevent many of their countrymen from receiving Christianity, but to weaken the faith of those who had received it, and even to bring them near to apostasy. The apostle therefore found it necessary to write this epistle to the Hebrews, for the purpose of showing that the Gospel in all its substantial elements, was founded on God's former revelations to the fathers of the Jewish nation, and especially on the Mosaic law. To this law

the Jews of his time cherished an unalterable attachment, and a consequent inveterate hostility to the Gospel. In the first sentence he unfolds comprehensively his design in writing the epistle. The only possible mode of reasoning, from which there was any hope of convincing these gainsaying Jews, was by an argument *ex concessis* -- by proofs derived from their own Scriptures, especially from the Mosaic law. This mode of reasoning the apostle adopted, insomuch that this epistle may be emphatically esteemed an argument *ex concessis* to the Hebrews, founded in the acknowledged testimonies of God's revelations to their fathers, and, more than all in the Mosaic law, as an evanescent representative system of civil government.

Fully to support this view of the epistle, a full exposition of the whole of it would be necessary, while to justify in the strongest manner the remark concerning the Mosaic law, would require a similar exposition of the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th chapters. Such an exposition of these chapters, which is what my present object more directly requires, would be quite superfluous. Nothing can be plainer, from the perusal of these chapters, than that they were written as an argument *ex concessis* with the Jews; in other words, to show them that according to the facts and principles which they believed and admitted respecting the Mosaic law, this law was a system of national government, a theocracy, and, as such, a system representing God's higher system of moral government.

(Chap. vii. 11, 12.) Is not the necessity of a priest, of an order so entirely different from that of Aaron, a declaration of the utter inefficacy of the priesthood of the latter, and of the design of God to change it? And if the very priesthood under which or on account of which the law was given (v. 11), is changed, is there not also a necessity of a change in the law?

(Chap. viii 18, 19.) The priesthood then being wholly changed, there is of course an entire abolition of the prior commandment, i.e., of the Mosaic law, by which it was instituted, because of its utter insufficiency and failure to procure acceptance with God; for the _____, the Mosaic law, made no man by its priesthood, acceptable to God, but, &c.

(Chap. vii. 28.) Hence it is plain that Christ, as a priest made by the word of the oath, supersedes the high priests which the law maketh, and of course the law that maketh them. (Chaps. viii. ix. x.) I need not say how utterly insignificant and useless, according to the apostle, were the atonements and sacrifices under the law, nor how effectual and glorious was the great sacrifice for sin, even the sacrifice of the Son of God himself, now set down at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, as the abiding High Priest in "the holy places" the Lamb in the midst of the throne;" nor the difference, or rather the contrast, which the apostle draws between the sacrifices under the Mosaic dispensation and the sacrifice of Christ, and how manifestly these things are alleged by the apostle to show that the Mosaic law, its priesthood, its offerings and sacrifices for sin, had come to an end. I shall only call attention to some declarations of the apostle which are explicit to my purpose.

(Chap. viii. 5.) The priests under the law, in their services, furnish a representation and shadow of heavenly things.

(Chap. viii. 6, to the end.) The superiority of Christ's ministry is here estimated by his being the mediator of a covenant established on promises of eternal blessings, compared with a covenant which promised only temporal blessings. We have next the fatal weakness and deficiency of the Mosaic law, and the fact of its being entirely superseded by completing, perfecting a new covenant in respect to the house of Israel, &c. (v. 8). This new covenant is entirely different from the Mosaic law, even as different as are temporal and earthly things from spiritual and heavenly things (vs. 9-12). And from calling the latter new, the apostle infers that he hath made the first old, and infers that "that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

But without dwelling thus on what can need no explanation, except what a correct translation of some passages would furnish, I will only refer to the ninth chapter, from the seventh verse to the end, and the tenth, from the first to the thirtieth verse, requesting attention to the apostle's

assertions of the utter inefficacy of the provisions of the Mosaic law, except to procure forgiveness of national sins -- of its representative character, not to say its double sense (ix. 8, 9, 23, 24; x. 1), and of the entire abrogation of the Mosaic system of law when the Messiah should come (ix. 10).

Thus it appears that Paul, in this epistle to the Hebrews, by an argument *ex concessis*, and, as I may say, by this only, professes at least to establish Christianity on the basis of God's former revelations -- especially on that revelation called the Mosaic law. In the exhibition of this argument he neither assumes the authority of an apostle, nor rests his interpretation and explanation of the Mosaic law on his inspiration or any revelation of its import peculiar to himself; nor resorts to any novel interpretations, either figurative, typical, or literal. What have these things to do with an argument *ex concessis*? Had the apostle relied at all on either of these things, his argument would not have been what he pretended it to be, nor have proved what he pretended to prove by it. It would have had no weight, nor be fitted to have any, with either the believing or unbelieving Jews to whom he wrote. The reply would have been as unanswerable as it would have been obvious: We have never understood nor known any among us, learned or unlearned in the law, who have interpreted and understood it as you do. This great argument in this great epistle of the great apostle, unless the commonly received and universally admitted interpretation of the Mosaic law by the Jewish people was that now assumed and reasoned upon by the apostle, would have been an argument founded on facts and principles assumed by him to be conceded, which were not conceded. But what right or warrant has any man, especially an apostle, thus to reason on fictitious or false premises? And now if the facts and principles of the apostle's argument were conceded universally by the Jews, then they knew or believed that the Mosaic law was what Paul assumed it to be. This view of this law must have been not only that of the learned of that age, and the popular view as derived from the expounders and teachers of the law but with the highest probability that of the ancient prophets, which was perpetuated through successive generations to the time of the apostle. Nor is the least evidence to the contrary furnished by the interpretation of this law on the part of modern Jews, with their hostility to the divine origin of Christianity.

What then is this view of the Mosaic law so well established by Jewish usage, and assumed by the apostle in the argument of his Epistle to the Hebrews? It is, that the Mosaic law was a national system of government, which, whatever other peculiarity it involved, was a representative system exhibiting God's higher system of moral government over men under a gracious economy. In the language of the apostle, it was a representation and shadow of the heavenly things (_____); it had a shadow of good things to come (_____); in one essential respect it was a parable (which signifies an information either by speech or action), in which one thing is put for another (ix. 8, 9), of the time then present, &c. Nor is this all. It was a representations shadow (not the very image or substance) of the good things to come -- a parable for the time which interposed between the tabernacle service (v. 8) and the time of reformation (v. 10), during which the gifts and sacrifices could in no degree expiate moral offenses, or relieve a guilty conscience, or deliver from final condemnation; but being at most _____ (ix. 10), ordinances, or institutions for the righteousness of the flesh -- grounds of acceptance before a civil tribunal (ix. 9-13), imposed UNTIL the time of reformation. It was an institution, a _____, so incomplete, so inadequate, in respect to God's great ulterior design, that on this account he said by his prophet, "I will complete a new covenant," &c., thus making the first old; and that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. On the whole then, whoever was the author of this Epistle to the Hebrews, he has, on the acknowledged divine authority of the Jewish revelation, and especially of the Mosaic law itself, silenced every Jewish objection to the divine origin of Christianity; and thus compelled every Jew either to abandon the divine authority of Moses in the law, or to admit the divine authority of Christ in the Gospel. In addition to this, if Paul or any other inspired writer was the author of this epistle, then is it clothed alike in its argument and its conclusion with the authority of God; and the theocracy of Israel was a system of national government, late in its origin and temporary in duration, and as such designed to represent God's higher system of moral government over all men as moral and immortal beings. The Mosaic law was a theocracy.

LECTURE VII: THE NATURE OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT AS REVEALED.

Introduction. -- Plan unfolded. -- The subjects of six sections announced. -- Section first: Law immutable in its authority. -- Dogma of man's inability discussed. -- Three theories in support of it: The Augustinian, the Arminian, the Edwardian. -- These theories discussed. -- Section second: The law immutable in its claim. -- Claim defined. -- Can never be satisfied In owe of disobedience. -- Neither by the infliction of penalty, nor by repentance, nor by an atonement

I HAVE attempted to establish from the Scriptures, the general FACT of God's moral government over men, and given what I consider the true view of the Mosaic law or Jewish theocracy. By this discussion the way is prepared, as otherwise it could not be, to show

THE NATURE of God's moral government over men, as exhibited by Revelation.

What I maintain and hope fully to evince is, generally speaking, that the Scriptures exhibit God as administering over men a perfect moral government under an economy of grace.

A perfect moral government, as before defined, is the influence of the rightful authority of a moral governor on moral beings, designed so to control their action as to secure the great end of action on their part through the medium of law.

Law, in this general forensic import, is an authoritative, perfect rule of moral action, fully sustained in its authority by the requisite sanctions. In this general forensic import of the word, law is essential and common to

every form of a perfect moral government.

There are two kinds of a perfect moral government. Law as above defined, is common and essential to both. In the one, this law is also the rule of judgment, according to which the transgressor must be condemned to bear its penalty. In the other, another rule of action under an economy, of grace, is the rule of judgment. The one may be called a system of mere law; the other, a system of law and grace combined. The former was adopted in Eden in respect to our first parents, before their apostasy; the latter, after their apostasy, was adopted in respect to them and all their descendants. It is this particular form of a perfect moral government which, as I maintain, God is shown by revelation to be administering over men, namely, a perfect moral government under an economy of grace.

This system of God's moral government may be justly viewed as consisting of two great and essential parts, which, while sustaining to each other the most important relations as parts of one system, may with advantage be separately considered. The nature of the system can be unfolded only by the exhibition of the law which is included in the system, and also of the economy of grace which is included in it. The latter, with the many great and prominent facts and truths with which it is connected, on which it depends, and which it implies facts and truths which are commonly called the doctrines of grace -- I design to make the subject of future investigation. The former, the law of God's moral government -- law as essential and common to every system of perfect moral government is the subject of our present inquiry.

So different are the two particular forms of God's moral government to which I have referred, that to form just views of either, they need to be clearly and accurately distinguished, especially by precise conceptions of law as a general forensic term, or in that import of the word in which the thing is common to both forms of a perfect moral government. Indeed, on this subject I am constrained to say that to my own mind the views of theologians are in a high degree unsatisfactory, and wholly inadequate to

a consistent system of Biblical theology. So little attention has been given to the essential nature and principles of a perfect moral government, both by theologians and interpreters, that while they have seen that an economy of grace must greatly modify the law of a merely legal system of moral government, they have not seen that an economy of grace can in no respect modify law as an essential, eternal, immutable element of such a government.

The inquiry now before us is, What, according to scriptural usage is the divine law in the general import of the term, and when employed to denote the perfect law of God's perfect moral government over men? Law, under a merely legal system, specifically differs in some respects from law under an economy of grace, while yet it has a meaning which is common to both cases. What then is law as common to both a merely legal system and a system of grace? I propose to answer this inquiry, in the following sections, by considering law in this import:

1. As immutable in its authority, its claim, and its sanctions.
2. As a rule of action, and not a rule of judgment.
3. In its requirement as a prohibition of its opposite, and vice versa.
4. In the sum of its requirements.
5. In the import of its sanctions.
6. As an expression of the lawgiver's preference of obedience to disobedience.

Sect. 1. -- Law as immutable in its authority, its claim, and in its sanctions.

I proceed to show that in the sense in which the language is now used, the law of God is immutable in the three respects now specified.

(1.) In its authority.

The authority of the divine law, or the authority of God as a lawgiver, is his right to command which imposes an obligation to obey, and results from his, infinitely perfect character. That God possesses this character, is here to be assumed. That on the ground of this character, he claims authority over men, as their moral governor or lawgiver, we have attempted to prove in a former lecture (Lect. I.) from the Scriptures. When, in the account of his giving law to man in Eden, we read that "The Lord God COMMANDED the man;" when we read that he said to Abraham, "I am the ALMIGHTY GOD, walk before me, and be thou perfect;" and again, when giving his law to Israel, "I am the LORD THY GOD, &c., thou shalt have no other gods before me;" and when in the New Testament we find the first and great commandment to be, "Thou shalt love the LORD THY GOD;" and again, "GOD now COMMANDETH all men to repent;" we cannot fail to see God presenting himself throughout his entire revelation, in the character of infinite perfection, and on this ground resting his rightful authority over men as their lawgiver. Nor can we, admitting the reality of such a Being and of his revelation, question his authority.

Nor is it supposable that any Christian theologian should directly deny or imagine himself to deny, that God reigns in this unabated, rightful authority over men. But there are strange things in the theology of man's devising. And here I am constrained to ask, Whether in all this theology both Catholic and Protestant, theologians, in maintaining the doctrines of grace, have not extensively maintained opinions -- philosophical dogmas, unscriptural principles -- and held them as essential doctrines of the word of God, which are palpably inconsistent with and utterly subversive of God's authority as a lawgiver? Without referring to more remote incongruities on this subject, may it not be said to be a prevalent doctrine of the Christian Church from the time of Augustine, and emphatically in the two great divisions of the Reformed Church known as the Calvinistic and Arminian, that "God commands what man cannot perform;" "that man by the fall lost all ability of will to any thing spiritually good;" "that

God did not lose his right to command, though man lost the power to obey?"

Nor have any attempts of theologians to justify, to palliate, or to conceal this doctrine of man's inability, been even plausibly successful. There are but three theories on the subject which I deem worthy of notice -- the Augustinian or Calvinistic, the Arminian, and the Edwardian. According to the first, we are told, and this on the pretended authority of the word of God, but without a text to prove it, that all mankind, as they were created one moral person in Adam, had this power to obey God, but that they utterly lost it by sinning in him, and that all his descendants thus created and existent in Adam, are born without this power as truly as the beasts of the field, and yet are responsible for the use of it. This dogma involves the absurdity of saying, that power which is necessary to the beginning and essential to the very existence of moral obligation, is not necessary to its continued existence, and that it is fit and what ought to be, that power which has no existence, should be used; and that when all the responsibility in such a case pertains to the single act of destroying the power, men are responsible for not using it after it is destroyed. The Arminian theory of man's inability or want of power is the same, excepting a vain attempt to conceal its revolting aspect by the still greater absurdity of what is called a gracious ability. The advocates of this theory plainly subvert and virtually deny the grace of God, in their very attempt to magnify it; for if man has not ability or power to obey God without grace, then he does not sin in not obeying, since a being who cannot act morally right cannot act morally wrong. Such a being cannot be truly said to receive or be capable of receiving grace, for grace is favor to sinners. Besides, what does the supposed grace of God do? Does it give man power to obey, then man has power to obey as he must have before he obeys. But even this is no security that he will obey. Adam sinned with this power. The grace then does not meet the exigency of the case. Is it said he has power to use the grace furnished? But what power is this? Until man has power to obey, it is absolutely inconceivable that he should obey, for the act of obedience is his own act, done in the use or exercise of his own power to obey. Thus the grace of God according to this scheme, must by a direct act of creation impart some new essential mental faculty or power to the soul of man, to qualify man to act morally

right or wrong. Without the grace of God man has not a human soul, for he has not the true and essential nature of such a soul -- the power requisite to moral action. He cannot be a sinner, and of course grace to him cannot be favor to a sinner. Grace is no more grace.

The Edwardian theory of inability, what is it? The inability to love God, which it maintains, is the inability to love and hate the same object at the same time, or the inability to will opposites at the same time. The ability which this scheme affirms, to soften it may be, the revolting aspect of the inability which it maintains, is the wonderful power of man not to will, or to avoid willing opposites at the same time, or power to will without willing against his will. Now as to this inability, it is an absolutely fatal possession, for God can never remove it, i.e., he can never impart power to man to will opposites at the same time, any more than he can impart power to a body to move in opposite directions at the same time. And then again, as to the ability or natural ability of this scheme, there is the same difficulty; for the mind neither has nor can have in the nature of things, the power or ability specified. It has doubtless power to will, but has not power in willing to avoid willing against its will, any more than a part has power to be less than the whole, or than two and two not to be four. There is a possibility, in the nature of things, in each of the three cases, that the thing affirmed should be; but this possibility does not result from power to make it so. A part is less than the whole, in the nature of things, and not as the result of power. So man in willing, wills without willing against his will in the nature of things; but not as the result of power, either natural power or any other power. That he wills is owing to his power to will; but that he wills without willing opposites at the same time, is not owing to his power. Such power or ability is inconceivable. Power to cause that to be which is necessary in the nature of things, as power to make two and two to be four, can have no existence, nor pertain to God or man. God can give no such ability to man. The natural ability of man to obey God, as defined by Edwards and others, has no existence and can have none. It is an essential nothing. Thus according to this Edwardian theory, while there is not the shadow of ability or of power on the part of man to obey God, the moral inability of the theory, the inability to love and hate the same object at the same time, though undeniable, is unchangeable either by man or his Maker. Nor is this all. Such an inability

furnishes not the slightest evidence, that when one wills morally wrong, he has not in the proper and true use of language, power or ability to will morally right; nor that when he has willed morally wrong, he has not power or ability to will morally right the next moment.

It is worthy of remark, that the theologians who have denied man's ability as a moral being and a sinner, have felt themselves obliged to base his moral responsibility in something which they call ability to obey. The Augustinian rests it on ability created in man when Adam and all his posterity in him were created, but lost or destroyed by their sinning in Eden; the Arminian devises the solecism of a gracious ability; and the Edwardian a natural ability, which is utterly inconceivable in *rerum naturâ*. All this clearly shows how impossible it is for the mind to assent to the absolute, unqualified proposition that man's obligation to obey is not founded in his ability to obey. These assertions of ability indeed, amount to nothing which can be real or true as the basis of moral responsibility; while the doctrine of an inability which is subversive of all moral responsibility, is constantly inculcated.

I shall hereafter attempt to show, that the Scriptures always proceed on the assumption of man's ability or power to obey God; that there is not a passage in the sacred volume which teaches or implies any inability of man to act morally right; that the passages commonly relied on to prove man's inability to act morally right assert no such inability, but all inability in respect to something widely different; and particularly an inability or impossibility with a morally wrong heart to act right in subordinate or executive action, which is not moral action. This inability is inculcated to show how vain the hope is of pleasing God with a wrong heart, and as a reason for changing the heart; thus clearly implying, not that the sinner cannot change his heart, but that he can. (Rom. viii. 7, 8; Matt. vii. 18; xii. 33, 34; John, xv. 4, 5.)

What philosophy has taught on this subject we have to some extent seen already. What the Scriptures teach respecting it, I propose to inquire more fully hereafter. I will only call attention to some general features of

their testimony. We find, that in all cases the Scriptures exhibit the moral change in man, either as that which man is bound to accomplish in the use of his own power, as in the command, "Make you anew heart and a new spirit;" or as that which he has accomplished in the use of his own power, as in the assertion, "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man;" or as that which through a divine influence they are required to perform in the use of their own power, as in the requirement, "Work out your own salvation," &c., "for it is God which worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure;" or as that which they through a divine influence, have accomplished in the use of their own power, as in the assertion, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." Thus, in all these prominent forms, and I might say in other forms, this great moral change in man is presented in the most guarded manner as his own act -- done of course from its very nature proximately and necessarily in the use or exercise of his own power. It is his heart with which he is required to exercise new and holy affection; it is himself who has changed his own character as his own doing; it is his will which is "to will," and his power to work or do, which is to work and do; it is his power to abandon sin and to obey God, with which he purifies his soul and actually obeys the truth. What if the change is "through the Spirit" -- this fact no more interferes with the fact that it is accomplished in the use of the sinner's own power, than were it done without the Spirit in view of truth and motives. On the contrary, the very work of the Spirit in this change consists in bringing the sinner to use his power in morally right action. Even could we suppose new mental power to be given to the sinner, something more -- certain mental states, antecedent thoughts, desires, &c. -- would be necessary to give certainty to the right use of the power. The mere power, whether given in the creation of the soul or afterward, cannot supersede the necessity of that peculiar interposition of the Spirit, by which alone the right use of the power is made certain. Thus in what the Scriptures teach respecting the work of the Spirit, the power of man to act morally right is presupposed. If it were not so, what would there be before the Spirit to do? Do you say to create new powers in man? But if this were all, it might only make the matter worse. I only add --

That the law of God, in the very terms of it, settles the question. How

does it read? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." And is this God's right to command, without man's power to obey? Is this the doctrine of man's inability to obey God, an inability to be removed by an ability through grace; an inability because ability was lost in Adam; an inability to effect the metaphysical impossibility of loving and hating at the same time; ay, inability in man to do what he can do? Or is it the fullest and most unqualified recognition of man's power to obey his God which language can furnish? Is not this law of God the standard of absolute moral excellence in man? Is not the man who should obey it absolutely, morally perfect? And is not its entire claim on man limited to a specified use of his power -- his power of heart, soul, mind, and strength? If this use of his own power is not claimed in the law, what is claimed?. Is it possible in the nature of things, that man should comply with the claim of this law except in the use of his own powers? or as some imagine, in the use of any other power than his own -- his own as existent under the claim and its obligation? And has man not power or no power, to obey a law which claims nothing but the use of his own power -- can he not love God as much as he can love him? Is man, by this law, required to love God in the use of the high powers which exalt him into a resemblance of God himself -- are these the powers which the divine Lawgiver specifies in the very words of his law as man's powers, and yet does the same Lawgiver affirm nothing so often as that man has not power to obey his law? Have men made after the similitude of God, no power to love God? Any conscience, from above or beneath, call answer this question. Shall all theology then, venture to teach and inculcate the doctrine that man cannot love the all-perfect God?

After all the attempts that have been made to vindicate this doctrine -- whether on the theory of our identity in Adam, or on that of a gracious ability, or on that of a natural ability and a moral inability -- is it not true that that ability on the part of men which is necessary to moral responsibility, has been and is still denied by the evangelical and orthodox ministry and Church? Are they not in fact and justly, understood by the people to teach and maintain an inability on the part of men to obey God without grace, which exempts them from all moral obligation to obey God, without grace to furnish ability? If their language on the

subject is such that, *de usu loquendi*, or when justly and properly interpreted, even with all their vain attempts at explanation, it means and is understood by the people to mean, an inability without grace on the part of men to obey God, as real as that of an inanimate substance, or as that to make a part equal to the whole, then are they not justly charged with teaching this doctrine? It is on this ground -- that of the proper meaning of the language that I claim that they maintain and teach that man, without the grace of God, has not that ability or power to obey God which is requisite to moral responsibility.

It is this doctrine which I claim to have shown extensively prevails, and which carries with it the subversion of God's authority as a lawgiver. Shall the Christian ministry then, continue to assert man's inability to obey God, and in words only assert, or rather faintly assume God's authority without assertion and without proof? Is this to make the just, the true, the useful impression of God's authority on the human mind? Is this after the manner of God? When "the Lord God" gave law to man in Eden, was there a doubt or a question concerning his right to reign -- I do not say warranted but possible -- in the mind of a creature formed in the image of himself? Was there any thing in the promise of a Redeemer; any thing in the expulsion of our first parents from the garden; any thing in the sentence pronounced on the race; any thing in the history of Cain and Abel; any thing in the whole patriarchal dispensation, in the destruction of the world by the deluge, in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone, in the calling of Abraham, and the covenant with him; any thing so fitted to arrest and absorb human thought, as God in his supreme and rightful authority as a lawgiver? When God delivered Israel from their Egyptian bondage, when he led them through the wilderness, when he lifted his voice of authority amid the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai, spreading terror and dismay among the assembled hosts and constraining their vows of allegiance, was his right to reign obscured or relinquished? Did even his attendant proclamation of "keeping mercy for thousands of them that love me," produce this effect? In their subsequent history, under the administration of the Mosaic theocracy as a representative system, amid altars smoking with expiatory victims, and shaking heaven and earth in execution of his law as the tutelary deity and national king of this people, and thus shadowing forth his higher relation

of the moral governor of men, who or what was to be thought of, but God in his supreme and rightful authority?

If we appeal to the New Testament, what meets us in this meridian light of revelation but the long-promised Messiah, the incarnate Logos, God manifest in the flesh, King of kings and Lord of lords -- who came, not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill, i.e., to accomplish the whole design or end of God's revelation -- to consummate all God's prior dispensations (Heb. ix. 26)? I need only refer to what every reader of the Gospels must know, to show how He to whom was given all power in heaven and on earth, always and in all things exalted God's authority as a lawgiver (Luke, xxii. 36). And what appears in equal fullness in the rest of the New Testament, in the life and labors, in the preaching and the writings of apostles, especially in those of the apostle Paul, is the same God in the same supremacy and splendors of his moral dominion. To deny this manifestation of God throughout the New Testament is scarcely less than to deny that God is therein revealed at all.

In accordance with what has been said, I now ask, Is there any way to magnify the grace of God in this world's redemption from the power and the doom of sin, except by unfolding his rightful authority as a lawgiver? Can any adequate manifestation of the riches of his grace and mercy -- an object so dear to the heart of all who love him -- be made, while the Church and its ministry deny to men that essential characteristic of every subject of law -- the ability to obey it? Can this be done, and God's authority as a lawgiver be apprehended and felt? Shall the friends of God and of his truth forever reiterate man's inability without grace to obey the living God, and not so much as tell us what they mean by grace to a being so utterly devoid of all moral responsibility without the grace? Or shall they maintain and teach that men are made after the image of God, and with that power either to obey or disobey their Maker which qualifies them to be subjects of his perfect moral government? Shall they or shall they not honor and magnify the grace of God "favor to sinners -- to moral beings who can and who ought, and yet who in fact never will obey God without the supernatural grace of his Holy Spirit? Shall they or shall they not enthrone God in his supreme and rightful authority as the moral

governor of men, without a shadow to obscure its cloudless majesty?

On this subject I cannot but suggest the most cautious reflection and thorough reconsideration of the views and opinions of the most distinguished theologians who have gone before us. Grateful to God for their labors, I do not forget that the greatest and best of men are "but darkly wise," and that in the word of God there are rich treasures of knowledge yet to be revealed. How desirable that the whole Church should, in faith, apprehend God in the unimpaired glories of his justice and his grace! How much is lost, if one truth concerning God in these high relations is lost to a sinful world!

I proceed, as proposed, to show that the law of God's moral government is immutable --

(2.) In its claim.

By the claim of law, I intend its claim on the subject for that action which is to be performed by the subject., God as a lawgiver has specified such action, and claims its performance by every subject on the ground of his rightful authority. It is this claim in his law which I now say is immutable. This is at once obvious from the essential nature of all that was ever called law in the forensic use of the word. Law in this use of the word, which should express no claim on subjects for action or conduct with the design of the lawgiver thereby to regulate such action, would be an anomaly. More need not be said to convince any reader of the Scriptures, who believes that God is what he is and that man is what he is, that the claim of God's law as exhibited in the Scriptures, is and must be, like its author, absolutely immutable. Nor is there any occasion for saying any thing on this important part of our subject, in addition to what has been already said in preceding lectures, except what arises from what a large class of Christian theologians maintain. I allude to their favorite and frequently repeated theological dogma, that the law and justice of God are satisfied by the atonement of Christ, in respect to all those for whom

it is made. I shall not stop to inquire whether this or equivalent language can be true, in some arbitrary and unauthorized meaning which may be given it. The meaning of those who employ it is, for the most part, too obvious to be mistaken. They mean, that every claim of the law and justice of God in respect to the elect, is as fully satisfied by the atonement of Christ, as had they sinlessly and perfectly obeyed the law, so that the penalty of the law cannot be inflicted on them, nor its reward withheld from them, according to any principle of justice.

It is not my present design to examine fully what the advocates of this view of the atonement allege in its support. This belongs to another part of our course of lectures. I can only say here, that in my view, when the subject is thoroughly examined, it will be found that the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction has resulted solely from a false philosophy respecting the principles of law and moral government, which has not the least plausibility or support from the Scriptures. I know of no passage in the word of God which expresses even a semblance of the idea of an atonement, as a satisfaction of the claim of law and justice on the transgressor of law. The Hebrew word _____, copher, I am aware is rendered in Numb. xxxv. 31, 32, by the word satisfaction, which ought to be rendered by the word atonement. To render it satisfaction, however, is even worse than a mere begging of the question, for the connection shows decisively that there may be a copher which shall not be taken or accepted, and which of course could not be a satisfaction. But my present object is not to examine the pretended scriptural arguments for this view of the atonement, but rather to show its inconsistency with the known nature and principles of law. I proceed then on this ground, to show that --

The claim and only claim of the divine law on its subject, can, in case of disobedience, never be satisfied.

Law has but one claim on its subject. It claims his obedience to law, and it claims of him nothing else. The lawgiver does not claim punishment of the subject in case of transgression, as the act of the subject nor indeed

in any sense whatever. The lawgiver threatens punishment for transgression, and executes the threatening if it be executed at all, as his own act, and not as the act of the disobedient subject fulfilling a claim on him. The same is true of law and of justice, for though they may be said to require or to claim the punishment of the transgressor as the necessary means, under a system of mere law, of sustaining the authority of law or of the lawgiver, this claim for punishment is not a claim on the subject for an act on his part, but solely a claim on the lawgiver as his act -- his act of justice to vindicate his own rights and the rights of his kingdom. Under any other aspect or relation, punishment could make no expression of supreme disapprobation of sin, and of course could not sustain his authority nor be a legal penalty. Besides, it is inconceivable and impossible that a perfectly benevolent lawgiver should be satisfied with sin, and with the infliction of the legal penalty on transgressors, as a substitute for their perfect obedience and consequent perfect blessedness. In the one case, with all the miseries involved, he would simply sustain his authority or vindicate his justice, as a lawgiver; while in the other, not only the same result would be secured, but his own perfect blessedness would also be secured by the perfect holiness and perfect blessedness of his kingdom. And could perfect benevolence be satisfied with the former result instead of the latter? And if benevolence could not be satisfied with the former result, then neither the claim of law nor the claim of justice for obedience could be satisfied with it. Neither justice nor law ever claimed the perfect obedience of every subject of law, except as such obedience was necessary to secure the rights of God and of his kingdom in their perfect blessedness. In case of transgression, neither law nor justice can execute the legal penalty as the means of the perfect blessedness of all. It is too late for this. And can the claim of law and justice be satisfied by an act of the lawgiver sustaining his authority, and showing him to be just when every claim of law and justice on his subjects in respect to its object and end is utterly frustrated by so much sin and misery, instead of satisfied by the perfect holiness and happiness of all? Can a benevolent lawgiver, a perfect law, inflexible justice, be satisfied with such results of a moral government? It is impossible. The lawgiver, his character his law, his authority, his justice, are maintained in their unobscured perfection -- shining in cloudless glory; but their every claim on the subjects of law is by sin utterly and forever unsatisfied in its object and end.

And further, while law and justice do not claim the punishment of the transgressor of law as an equivalent for his not satisfying the claim by obedience, neither do they claim repentance after sin as a satisfactory substitute for perfect obedience. Nor do they claim the obedience or the imputed righteousness or any sacrifice by an atonement, or any thing else on the part of another, as a satisfactory substitute for the obedience of the subject. Law and justice are enthroned in a perfect moral government to define, protect, and enforce rights. This is an absolutely universal principle, which must be carried out unless the possessor of a right consents, or chooses for good and sufficient reasons to waive or abandon his right. The moral governor has rights. His kingdom has rights. Every subject has rights as an individual. It is important here to contemplate some of them. The moral governor then, in addition to such rights as the right to reign, the right to give and uphold law, has the right to claim of each and every subject of law his perfect and perpetual obedience to law. To deny this, is to say that the rights of God and of his kingdom -- the rendering to all their due from every subject -- can in case of transgression, or without universal perfect obedience to God's perfect law, be secured by some other means or method than by such obedience. But if this be too absurd to be said, then how shall the claim of law and justice without the perfect obedience of every subject of law, ever be met and satisfied? Will it be said that such is not the necessary and only means of the end specified, and that the existence and miseries of sin with the atonement of the Son of God, were as good a means of this end as the supposed obedience? I answer, that this is utterly impossible and inconceivable; for how can a system of means, involving sin and its miseries with the sufferings and sacrifices involved in atonement for sin, produce as good a result as the highest conceivable happiness -- the necessary result of universal and perfect obedience? Besides, to suppose otherwise is to suppose that the Lawgiver had no right to claim such obedience. This claim on his part, if it is any thing, is a declaration that such obedience is the necessary and only means of the end specified, and that nothing else can be substituted for it as such a means. If therefore, it is not such a means, the claim of law is not true nor just -- is not dictated or demanded but is forbidden by justice. Law could not be law, unless obedience to it were the necessary means of the highest conceivable good. If it is such a means, then its claim for

universal perfect obedience is dictated and demanded by justice; and without such obedience, this claim can never be satisfied. It must remain, if once violated, and to any extent in which it is violated, remedilessly and forever unsatisfied. The Lawgiver indeed, in his claim for universal perfect obedience, plainly declares that he will be satisfied with such obedience. But in the sanctions of his law, he says as plainly that he cannot be satisfied with any thing but such obedience. How can he be? What else will secure the rights of all; not only the rights of the Lawgiver himself, and of his subjects, but the voluntarily surrendered but otherwise the inviolable rights of the eternal Logos? What else will secure to the Lawgiver himself, and to his kingdom, the highest possible blessedness, but the universal perfect obedience of his kingdom and its result in this blessedness? Not sin followed by repentance; for then the law would not claim obedience or forbid sin, but only claim repentance after sin: not sin and the execution of its fearful penalty; for how could the infliction of such miseries be, to the infinite benevolence of the Lawgiver, a satisfactory substitute for the perfect obedience and blessedness of his kingdom: not sin and an atonement made by the agonies of the Son of God on the cross, and the sacrifice of the Father in delivering the Son to these agonies, or rather in inflicting them; for what satisfaction from all this, compared with that of the fulfillment of the claim of law, in the perfect holiness and blessedness of its subjects: not sin, and the so called imputed righteousness of Christ to the elect or to believing sinners; for how can the mystical absurdity of imputing and thereby making the righteousness or obedience of one subject of law, which could only answer the claim of law on himself, the righteousness or obedience of others, satisfy a violated claim for their own personal absolute moral perfection? It is true, that if sin occurs, God can, and God only can sustain his authority or right to reign, and this either by the execution of the penalty or by an atonement, and that can be done by either. But what has this to do with satisfying the claim of law for obedience under this sustained authority and its influence? Obedience which alone satisfies the claim, presupposes the validity of the claim; the validity of the claim presupposes the authority of the Lawgiver; and the authority of the Lawgiver presupposes the manifestation by himself of his perfect character, or perfect qualification to govern. What the Lawgiver is, and what he does, is the sole basis and source of his authority, and it is his exclusive prerogative to sustain it. He neither derives it from the acts or the doings of his subjects, nor intrusts its support or continuance to them.

The obedience of the subject though it satisfies the claim of law, is not that on which the authority of the Lawgiver in the least degree depends. The want of obedience, that is, the act of transgression, unpunished or unatoned by the Lawgiver himself, would result in the subversion of his authority. This result would follow the want of obedience, not because obedience is the source of the Lawgiver's authority, but solely because the Lawgiver would neglect by his own act either to execute the penalty, or as an equivalent to provide an atonement. But neither of these acts of the Lawgiver, in case of transgression, satisfies the claim of law on the subject of law. They are the acts of the Lawgiver himself, and not the sinless perfect obedience of the subject. Such obedience, had it been rendered, could neither originate nor sustain the Lawgiver's authority, by satisfying the claim of law; for his authority, as we have said, must exist and be fully sustained prior to being satisfied by obedience, or there could be no authoritative claim, that is, no claim of law to be satisfied. In the administration of his government by authority therefore, it is alike his prerogative and his function as a moral ruler, to perpetuate the authority which has its origin in his own character, exclusively by his own acts and doings. Thus he shows his supreme approbation of obedience, by conferring the requisite reward on the obedient subject, as the necessary and only means in this case of sustaining his authority. Thus he shows his supreme disapprobation of disobedience, by inflicting the requisite penalty on the disobedient, or by providing an atonement, as the necessary and only means in this case, of sustaining his authority. His authority is thus sustained by his own acts, and not by the acts of the subject. His own perfect obedience, though it satisfies the claim of the law, does not, as such a satisfaction, sustain its authority, but the Lawgiver's act in conferring the reward. But neither an atonement nor imputed righteousness, can do or effect any thing more than the perfect obedience of the subject of law in satisfying its claim or sustaining its authority. Of course nothing, as such a satisfaction, can sustain this authority. In case of transgression, neither subsequent perfect obedience, nor the execution of the penalty, nor the atonement, nor the so called imputed righteousness of Christ, nor his active or passive obedience, nor any of these things, nor all of them together, can satisfy the claim of law on the subject. Nor if they could, could they thereby sustain the authority of the law. Nor is there the least necessity of satisfying this claim of law or of justice, that its authority may be perfectly sustained.

Nothing can be plainer than that the authority of law may be sustained by the acts of the lawgiver, though its claim on the subjects be wholly unsatisfied and violated by the acts of the subjects. The law may be transgressed by every subject, and yet authority sustained by the execution of its penalty or by the provision of an atonement. By either, the lawgiver would fully express his supreme disapprobation of transgression, reveal his perfect character, and establish his authority. He would thus establish his right to reign as a moral ruler, and also, in the plenitude of his power, secure the object of this right, by still holding his throne in unobscured, unimpaired, rightful dominion. But in case of transgression he cannot secure the objects of other rights, the securing of which depend on the perfect obedience of all his subjects, viz., of his right to the highest conceivable blessedness, and of his right to the highest conceivable blessedness of his kingdom. One sin impairs this blessedness -- much more the sins of a world. Some of the most momentous rights in the universe, rights of God, and I may add, rights of his moral kingdom involving reciprocal obligation on the part of every subject, must be waived in respect to their objects, if his authority be sustained, whether by the execution of the penalty or by the provision of an atonement; for these rights are irretrievably violated by sin, and their objects hopelessly and forever sacrificed and lost. Such is a part of the work of sin. God is not as blessed -- his kingdom is not as blessed, as law and justice claimed of every subject, that they should be as the effect of obedience; not as blessed as they might and would have been, had there been no sin violating every principle of law and justice, and thus impairing the amount of blessedness. This deficiency, greater or less, is to be traced only to the offense and fault of each transgressor of law -- each violator of the immutable claim which law and justice held in respect to him. And now, how can eternal Justice -- the watchful, inflexible, benevolent guardian of the rights of God and of his moral universe ever be satisfied with the irretrievable violation of such rights, with its irretrievable results, or with these guilty authors? God indeed, as we have said, can sustain his authority or his right to reign, and secure the only object of this particular right in the glories of a perfect dominion, either by the execution of penalty or by an equivalent sacrifice in an atonement. But how much better had it been -- how much more grateful to infinite benevolence and perfect justice -- had this authority been upheld without

sin, with the rewards of the perfect and universal obedience of his moral kingdom! Such a result would have satisfied every claim of eternal law and eternal justice, which nothing else could satisfy God has done, in this view of the subject, as I have before shown, what he could as a perfect moral governor, to secure all the objects and ends of the best conceivable system of means, and of course of perfect benevolence and perfect justice. But he has been crossed and thwarted in this highest, greatest design, by sin. He is indeed truly said to be perfectly blessed, because he secures to himself the highest blessedness, which, in the nature of things, he can secure; because in a moral system the best conceivable, Omnipotence, by the mere dint of power could not avail to prevent an infringement of his rights, and the marring of his own highest blessedness, as well as that of his kingdom by sin; because when sin took the responsibility of this fearful achievement, he did what he could to counteract and redress the remediless calamity by an atonement. By this measure however, he has not satisfied his justice as a lawgiver, so that justice cannot punish the sinner. The perfect obedience of the sinner would have so satisfied law and justice, that justice could not punish. This effect could not be produced by an atonement, nor by any thing else, except by perfect obedience to the claims of law and justice. But while justice as the attribute of the lawgiver, is not under an atonement compelled to pardon or justify any sinner, neither is it compelled to condemn and punish. It can do either the one or the other, as the highest general good shall dictate or demand. What the atonement does, and all that it does as an atonement, is to render it consistent with justice to pardon the sinner, by fully sustaining even in such a case, the authority and the justice of the lawgiver in the best manner possible to him. Still this is not done in absolutely the best manner possible; nor could it be, without the perfect obedience of his whole moral kingdom. This, with its results -- his supreme approbation of it expressed in its rewards -- would have not only vindicated his right to reign, sustained his authority and justice as a lawgiver, but have vindicated all other rights -- the right of his kingdom to the highest conceivable blessedness, and especially his own right to his own highest conceivable blessedness -- for it would have fully secured the objects of these rights; rights which in respect to their objects, he has consented, in compassion to a sinful race, to waive, that he might accomplish the highest good possible to him in view of existing sin. It is by such a sacrifice, with all it involves, that God sustains his authority and his justice as a lawgiver, through an atonement in the

pardon or justification of the sinner. How then can it be pretended that his claim of law and of justice for the perfect obedience of his subjects, is or can be satisfied in view of universal sin, and that on the ground of such a satisfaction, sin is or can be pardoned or the transgressor justified? Plainly the claim of his law for the perfect and uninterrupted obedience of his disobedient subjects never has been and never can be satisfied. It is immutable like its author, and so long as he is what he is, and his subjects what they are, there can be no satisfaction for one violation of this high and holy claim of this eternal and immutable and perfect rule.

LECTURE VIII: THE NATURE OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT AS REVEALED.

Section third: Law Immutable In its sanctions. -- Law used in a generic sense. -- Theologians too often confine it to a legal system. -- Consequent errors. -- Error of Dr. John Taylor In asserting that the transgressor can be pardoned by and only by the prerogative of the sovereign -- similar error of those who hold that the legal penalty can be executed (by imputation or mystical union) on another than the transgressor. -- Contrary to known principles of law and justice. -- The authority only of the lawgiver sustained by penalty and an atonement. -- Pardon not a matter of right, nor merit, nor claim. -- General view of sanctions from the Scripture history.

I SHALL now attempt to show that the law of God's moral government, now under consideration, is immutable,

(3.) In its sanctions.

To prevent misapprehension I here remark again, that I use the word law in that somewhat general forensic meaning in which the word is employed in the Scriptures, to denote that which exists alike under a merely legal system and also under an economy of grace, or in that

meaning which is common to the word under both these systems of moral government.

The importance of precise views on the present topic, in my estimation, results chiefly from the errors of theologians respecting it, especially when considered in connection with the doctrine of forgiveness or justification. I do not indeed suppose that theologians have to any extent formally and explicitly denied the immutability of the sanctions of the divine law. They may in words affirm this immutability. But of law in what sense -- of what law do we so often hear the predicates, eternal and immutable? Of law I apprehend, in that sense in which it pertains exclusively to a merely legal system; of law, as both a rule of action and of judgment; of law in that meaning in which it can have no existence under an economy of grace; of law which, instead of being absolutely immutable, admits of a most important modification through grace. If law, in the specific sense in which it pertains to a merely legal system -- law as both a rule of action and of judgment -- admits of no change or modification, who of this sinful world can be saved? Some theologians of distinction trace, as we shall see, all that can be esteemed grace and mercy in behalf of transgressors directly to the sovereignty of the lawgiver. Others however, and a very large class of theologians, have rigidly maintained the absolute immutability of law as pertaining to a merely legal system, and hence have attempted to vindicate and uphold the essential principles of such a law, in the pardon and justification of sinful men, by the quidpro quo conception of an atonement, and of an atonement provided only for the elect, by the doctrine of a mystical union between Christ and believers, of the imputation of their sins to him and of Christ's righteousness to them and the satisfaction thereby of all the claims of law and justice in their behalf, &c., &c.

My object now is not fully to examine these palpable errors, for so I esteem them, but to show how entirely subversive they are of the known nature and principles of law. If, as theologians have commonly assumed, law, in the specific form in which it pertains to a merely legal system, be incapable of change or modification, then the utter, hopeless

inconsistency between the nature and principles of law and the sinner's justification would be palpable. The attempt to reconcile them on this assumption of theologians, would be an attempt to reconcile an eternal and immutable contradiction with itself -- to show how a sinner's justification, which cannot be according to the principles of law, can be according to these principles. But theologians, shut up by their false assumption concerning the nature of law, have felt themselves under a necessity of reconciling this palpable contradiction, and for this purpose have plainly racked their ingenuity to the utmost, and propounded as the exigency required, yet other contradictions in the form of dogmas no less palpably absurd.

What I now maintain is, that law -- the law of God's moral government as common to a merely legal system and to a system of law and grace combined and yet peculiar to neither is immutable in its sanctions.

This proposition I shall endeavor to establish, chiefly from the known nature and principles of law and the necessary scriptural import of the word.

It may seem quite unnecessary, especially after what has been before said, to show that law essentially involves sanctions. And perhaps it would be were it not for the almost constant virtual denials of this truth, in the speculations of theologians, in their views of the great doctrine of justification. So unreflective and careless on this subject have been the prominent theological writers -- Catholic and Protestant, Orthodox and Latitudinarian -- that from the times of Origen, not to say of Irenæus, they have scarcely to any extent worthy of notice, given any form to the great scriptural doctrine of justification, which has not in my view involved downright Antinomianism -- the subversion of the law of God in one of its essential elements.

What I have now said, I expect sufficiently to justify in the following remarks.

Law without sanctions can possess no authority. A perfect rule of action may indeed commend itself to the conscience of a moral being with more or less power or influence. But this influence is not that of authority.

If we suppose the lawgiver to give the most perfect rule of action without sanctions, or if we suppose him to give it with them and then so to separate them from the rule, or so to annul them in any way or by any measure or expedient that they cannot, according to strict legal principles or according to the principles, of law and justice, or according to the merit or demerit of any and every subject of law be executed -- then in neither case can the moral governor, nor his moral government, nor his law, be conceived to possess the least authority. Nor is this all. Sanctions are not only the necessary proof of the authority of the lawgiver, but the want of them is decisive proof against his authority. For if he actually felt the highest approbation of the best kind of action, and the highest disapprobation of the worst kind of action on the part of his subjects, as he must if he has the right to reign, he would actually express these feelings in the requisite legal sanctions, and thus enthrone his authority as the best means of securing the highest happiness and preventing the highest misery of his kingdom.

What follows? Where there is no law there is no transgression. Transgression being an impossibility, an atonement for sin, forgiveness of sin, a Saviour from sin -- all that we call the gospel, are also impossible absurdities. It is only when law stands forth to the apprehension of its subjects as a full manifestation of the lawgiver's estimate of obedience and its opposite, in the light of the requisite sanctions, that it can with the least truth or propriety be called law either by man or his Maker. If we suppose these sanctions not to pertain to law in their full character, force, and influence; if we suppose them to be separated from law, weakened, mitigated, nullified, then law is divested of its authority, and can with no more propriety be called law than an utterance, from the lips of infancy.

Such then, undeniably, is the universal conception which the human mind

forms of the thing called law, when the word is employed as a general forensic term, as before defined and explained. This conception of the thing therefore, *de usu loquendi*, constitutes the meaning of the word -- the meaning in which the sacred writers often use it, and intend that it should be understood. If this be not so, then God in his revelation employs human language to no purpose for the instruction of mankind.

I shall now attempt, as proposed, by some further explanation, to vindicate this view of the import of the word law as used in the Scriptures, by exposing what I regard as certain theological errors opposed to it, which result from confounding one of its specific meanings with its general forensic meaning.

The first of these errors which I shall notice, and which has had no inconsiderable prevalence with the opposers of orthodox theology, is that which is plausibly set forth by Dr. John Taylor of Norwich, a celebrated scholar and critic. He says, that "transgress and die is the language of law. And therefore every transgressor, the moment he is such, is dead in law, and for any thing in law, he must continue so as long as it is true that he has violated law, that is, for evermore. The law which condemns him can give him no relief; for law would not be law if its sense and language were this -- the transgressor who doth not repent and obtain pardon shall die; seeing this would be to allow transgression by law upon the uncertain conditions of repentance and the sovereign's mercy."

The truth and justice of these remarks respecting law, in one specific sense of the word-law as pertaining to a merely legal system -- law as a rule of action and a rule of judgment -- law, in the form in which it was first given in Eden -- are beyond all denial. In this sense of the word law, "the transgressor is dead for evermore, and the law which condemns him can give him no relief." But with this view of the law as an absolute declaration that sin shall be punished, comes the apparently insurmountable difficulty -- how can sin be pardoned? How shall this great problem be solved? The ingenuity of our theologian readily devises a theory, in his view, fully adequate for its solution. He says, "It is the

prerogative of the sovereign or lawgiver to remit penalty altogether on the repentance of the transgressor." This assertion is not only wholly gratuitous, but it plainly involves the Lawgiver in palpable self-contradiction. For it is claimed that in his law, he affirms in the most absolute manner and meaning that the transgressor shall die -- shall not be pardoned -- and yet that the same Lawgiver, by virtue of his prerogative as a sovereign, can, and in effect that he will pardon the penitent transgressor. Thus, the language of the Lawgiver in his law, and his language in the promise, justly interpreted, are self-contradictory. His language in both cases cannot be true. And thus this theory of our author by convicting the Lawgiver of self-contradiction, denies his veracity and subverts his authority.

Nor is this all. This theory involves two errors, the one being the consequence of the other, while the two propositions which constitute the theory are both false. One of these errors is, that the execution of the penalty of law in case of transgression is absolutely unavoidable from the very nature of law. The other is, that it is the prerogative of the sovereign to pardon on the repentance of the transgressor. It is true that in case of transgression, the penalty of one particular kind of law -- of law as pertaining to a merely legal system is absolutely unavoidable. But then this kind of law admits of one great and material modification or change through an atonement, so that it shall cease to be a rule of judgment, and its penalty be averted. It may still be law in every essential element -- law in absolute perfection -- law unchanged and unchangeable in its high authority, its holy claim, and its righteous sanctions -- all that constitutes it law -- and yet through an atonement it may cease to be a rule of judgment, and its actually existing penal sanction may be, not separated from the law, but left unexecuted.

Here obviously, is the source of our author's error. He assumed that law, as a rule of action and a rule of judgment, is the only thing which can be perfect law, in the forensic use of the word. Hence his unqualified assertion, that "Transgress and die" is the language of law; meaning not merely that the penal sanction of death is inseparable from law, but that, if law be transgressed, the penalty must be executed. This is plainly an

error, if the provision of an atonement intervene, as it may. For an atonement, as the means of pardon, would accomplish nothing, or rather its effect in pardon would be worse than nothing, if it did not change law as a rule of action and of judgment into simply a rule of action, leaving law in its authority, its claim, its sanctions, unimpaired and unchanged. An atonement which did not sustain this authority, would involve the destruction of all law.

Not less plainly would this effect follow from the pardon of transgression, in the exercise of "the prerogative of the sovereign." This is undeniable, on the authority of Dr. Taylor himself. He says: "Law would not be law, if its sense and language were this -- the transgressor who doth not repent and obtain pardon, shall die; seeing this would be to allow transgression by law." But what difference can it make in respect to allowing transgression, whether the Lawgiver proffers pardon to the transgressor on repentance in the words of his law, or reveals the fact in some other mode, that he will pardon sin on repentance, in the exercise of his "prerogative as the sovereign and lawgiver?" It is the fact revealed by the Lawgiver, and not the mode in which he reveals it, which would destroy law. If it be said, that the fact is not revealed by the Lawgiver, then I ask, why is it asserted? If it be said that it is a fact or truth known by reason, then law is known to be a very different thing from what our author says it is. Besides, it is wholly a gratuitous assertion, and who but a madman would risk his salvation on such a basis? If it be said that there is no other way of reconciling grace in the pardon of the transgressor with the import of the word law, or with the essential nature of law, this not only shows how entirely gratuitous the theory is, but it also betrays the source of the error, in the false assumption respecting the general forensic meaning of the word law. He assumes that in this meaning, law in its essential nature as law, not only involves a penal sanction, or threatens transgression with punishment, but absolutely and inseparably connects the execution of the threatening with transgression. In other words, he assumes that law as law in its very nature is both a rule of action and judgment, mistaking a species or kind of law, the law of a merely legal system, for the genus law; and assuming that this kind of law is incapable of any modification or change by grace through an atonement, whereby, retaining its absolute perfection as law, it shall cease to be a rule of

judgment.

This fundamental error respecting the essential and immutable nature of law is not peculiar to this celebrated divine, and to those who with him have maintained "the prerogative of the sovereign and lawgiver to remit penalty altogether on the repentance of the transgressor." The same assumption, that the immutable law of God is both a rule of action and of judgment, has long been and is still common on the part of most orthodox theologians, and though it has not always occasioned precisely the same form of error in respect to pardon and justification, yet it may appear that it has occasioned substantially the same error, with many others not less inconsistent with the nature of law, not less opposed to the Scriptures, and not less revolting to common sense.

Of this assumption concerning the nature of law, the natural consequence on the part of theologians, are theories devised for the purpose of reconciling law and grace. Nor has theological ingenuity faltered even at so formidable an attempt at explanation; but according to its wont, regardless alike of the decisions of the oracles of God and of common sense, and welcoming mysteries to be believed as especially honoring revelation, has fearlessly shot the gulf of theological absurdity and self-contradiction.

To remove or explain away the inconsistency now referred to, orthodox theologians have devised and adopted some theory of equivalency, which, at least since the time of Anselm, has extensively prevailed. The object of this scheme is to show how every essential principle of law and justice, in the pardon and justification of the transgressor, is sustained and carried out by the work of Christ. This is obvious at once, from its prominent features. Thus it maintains that God, in his sovereign supremacy and right, constitutes a mystical union between Christ and the elect whereby they become one moral person; that in consequence of this constituted union, God imputes the sins of the elect to Christ, and in his sufferings and death inflicts the legal penalty of their sins on Him; that he also imputes the righteousness of Christ to them; that by these acts of

imputation and this mystical union, the sins of the elect become the sins of Christ as really as had He committed them, and the righteousness or obedience of Christ becomes as really the righteousness or obedience of the elect, as had they rendered it; that thus every justified sinner is regarded and considered and treated, not merely as if he had, but as having really and truly -- in re ipsa -- in his own person, never sinned, but perfectly obeyed the divine law; and thus every justified transgressor, having in actual verity fully met and satisfied and sustained every claim of law and justice, can meritoriously claim, before God, justification and eternal life.

It is apparent on the face of this theory of justification, that its design is to show that the justification of the transgressor rests strictly and literally on the veritable ground, that every claim of immutable law and justice are as fully sustained and secured in their objects or ends as they would be by the perfect sinless obedience to law, rendered by the transgressor himself.

I do not here propose a minute examination of this theory of justification, but to inquire how far it accomplishes the object it professes to accomplish -- that of showing the act of justifying the transgressor of law to be, so far as the principles of law and justice are concerned, a strictly legal and juridical act -- an act not only done in accordance with these principles, but literally and wholly based on these principles.

This theory, in two respects, proceeds on the same assumptions as that which has just been considered. And first, it assumes that the immutable law of God not only legally sanctions, but also that both law and justice necessarily involve in case of transgression, the inevitable execution of the legal penalty. This is obvious at once from the mere statement of the scheme already given, and also from the familiar asseveration that the legal penalty must be executed either on the transgressor or on his substitute. And further, like the theory referred to, it so assumes "the prerogative of the sovereign and lawgiver" as to show in two respects the act of justification to be wholly arbitrary -- an act in direct violation of

every known principle of law and of justice. For whence come the constituted mystical union of Christ and the elect, and the making, by imputation, their sins his sins, their ill-desert his ill-desert, and his righteousness their righteousness, except from "the prerogative of the sovereign?" The acts of pardon and justification in both cases are acts of mere arbitrary prerogative, for they depend ultimately in both on the simple exercise of such prerogative. Were it not for the supposed mystical union, the supposed imputation of sins and of righteousness could have no basis; and were it not for this supposed imputation of sins and righteousness, the acts of pardon. and justification could have no basis. Both acts therefore are without a pretense, wholly arbitrary, without a reason or shadow of a reason. Both would contravene the essential nature and principles of a perfect moral government, imply the right and the prerogative of a lawgiver to annihilate his law by an act of absolute sovereignty, and to rule for the weal or woe of his kingdom, according to his own caprice.

Thus on this scheme, the acts of pardon and justification rest precisely on the same ulterior ground on which that of Dr. John Taylor, and of a large class of latitudinarian diviner, places them -- "the prerogative of the sovereign" -- a ground which our opponents will admit to be no ground at all. But if the acts of pardon and justification depending directly on "the prerogative of the sovereign" depend on nothing, the same must be true if they depend indirectly or ultimately on this prerogative. Whence then arise the acts of constituting this mystical union, and of imputing sins and righteousness? Not from law or from justice, nor yet from the sufferings and death of Christ, for these according to the scheme under consideration are the effects of the mystical union and of imputation. The mystical union and imputation result simply and solely from "the prerogative of the sovereign," which is indirectly the basis of justification. But if this prerogative as a direct ground of justification amounts to nothing in one scheme, it can amount to no more as the indirect ground of it in the other.

I ask then, what possible influence or effect on the great principles of immutable law and justice can be ascribed to the phantasms of a

mystical union and an imputed righteousness? What warrant or authority, either in law or justice, has the lawgiver to pardon the transgressor on the ground of considering by prerogative, things to be realities which he knows are not realities, rather than to pardon him arbitrarily and directly, in the exercise of this prerogative without the intervention of a mystical union and an imputed righteousness? Will these vain and imaginary appendages to his moral administration change the principles of eternal and immutable righteousness? If not, then how by the gratuitous (theological) asseveration of them, can the pardon of the transgressor be more consistent With law and justice than it is in the scheme of the theologian of Norwich? Both schemes are substantially the same. Both rest on one and the same basis -- that of the prerogative of the sovereign. There can be (words only excepted) no reality in one scheme which is not in the other. If one scheme falls, the other falls. If both stand, then law and justice furnish not the slightest obstacle to the pardon of the transgressor, which "the prerogative of the sovereign" on condition of repentance cannot wholly remove, and we have only to proclaim the latitudinarian dogma, that God pardons the transgressor of his law solely on the ground of his repentance. Nay, worse than this if possible. For the scheme now opposed denies that repentance, or reformation, or any thing else will be the ground or condition of the exercise of the sovereign's prerogative in the act of pardon, without the antecedents of mystical union and imputation.

But the theory of justification now under consideration is not only substantially the same as another which its defenders would earnestly reprobate, but is flagrantly opposite to every principle of law and justice. If we know any thing of these principles, we know that no perfectly obedient subject of law can deserve its penalty. Suffering may indeed, in some supposable case, be inflicted on such a subject with his consent. But it cannot be inflicted even with his consent as a legal penalty or sanction -- in other words, it cannot be inflicted on such a subject on the principle, or under the assumption of his ill-desert as the ground of the infliction. No mystical union, nor imputation, nor any thing else on the part of a sovereign God, can impart ill-desert to a perfectly obedient subject of a perfect law. We know this with a higher degree of mental assurance than that with which we do or can believe that there is a perfect God, and to

suppose any degree of evidence which should disprove or contravene this knowledge of this principle, is to suppose the moral perfection of God to be disproved. Miracles are only a species of moral evidence, and this always admits of the possibility of the truth opposite to that which it proves. But that a morally perfect being, even Christ Jesus cannot be ill-deserving, is an intuition. For an omniscient God to regard or consider such a being to be ill-deserving, is as impossible as it is that he should know that to be true which he knows to be false; and to treat him as such would be, and be known to be as gross a violation of law, and as high-handed injustice on the part of an infinite as on the part of a finite being. Unless man then can unknow his necessary cognitions; unless he can know that to be false which he knows to be true; unless he can know that to be true which he knows to be false; unless he can know that to be just which he knows to be unjust, he cannot but know that ill-desert cannot be truly affirmed of a perfectly obedient subject of a perfect law, and of course that such a being cannot be capable of bearing, *de merito*, the legal penalty of such law. He who asserts the contrary, only proves that through the want of reflection he overlooks his own knowledge. This is indeed no uncommon error on the part of good men, especially of theologians in this imperfect state. He who falls into this error in respect to the all-perfect God in his high relation as the moral governor of men -- who imputes to him in this relation what the human mind as a knower necessarily knows to be falsehood and injustice -- ought to remember that to call evil good and good evil, to put darkness for light and light for darkness, is to encounter a fearful exposure.

A more minute examination of this scheme would show that every material part of it is entirely unknown to law or justice -- that it involves principles entirely foreign and directly repugnant to every principle of both, as well as utterly subversive of the Gospel plan of redemption -- principles which, instead of pertaining to the high relation of a perfect lawgiver, render the conception of such a relation impossible to the human mind. Indeed, if we are to rely on the necessary decisions and judgments of the human intellect -- without which we can rely on nothing as true -- then in this scheme these necessary decisions concerning law, justice, truth, equity, veracity, moral government, every thing which lies at the basis of faith, of confidence, and repose in God, are changed into

their opposites. Law ceases to be even respectable advice; for the lawgiver abandons its claims by sovereign prerogative. Justice is converted into injustice; for the lawgiver makes our sins the sins of another, and inflicts the legal penalty which is due only to us, on him who is perfectly holy and perfectly obedient to law as an act of justice to him! This, according to the scheme under consideration, satisfies the perfect justice of the lawgiver. And thus, in his sovereignty, by imputing our ill-desert to our substitute, and inflicting on him the penalty which we only deserve, but which he is said to deserve, he exempts us from all ill-desert and from the entire legal penalty. But this, according to the scheme, does not meet all the exigencies of the case. The lawgiver therefore, in a mode equally unauthorized, is supposed to make in the same arbitrary manner the obedience of the substitute our obedience, or perfect righteousness; and on the ground of this perfect righteousness, thus made really ours by sovereign prerogative, we are justified according to the principles of law and justice and the exactest truth of things. Sinners as we are, and deserving the whole penalty of a perfect law, we do yet, by the metamorphoses of mystical union and imputation, come to merit eternal life -- acquire a right to it as our legal reward!

Without pursuing for the present these details of absurdity and self-contradiction, I ask if this whole theory of justification is not the merest phantasm of the imagination instead of the reality of truth? I ask if it is not most flagrantly to transmute the essential nature and relations of things into their opposites, and thus to lead the mind to conceive what it necessarily conceives to be true, to be false, and what it necessarily conceives to be false, to be true? I ask if a theology thus produced is entitled to a moment's consideration as even in the slightest degree plausible, unless the mind disciplines itself into the belief that known phantasms are realities, and known realities phantasms; that known justice and known injustice, known transgression of law and known obedience to law, known merit and demerit in law, the known moral perfection of God, his benevolence, goodness, justice, veracity, grace, and mercy, when compared with their opposites, have changed places; in short, that every necessary conception which the human mind forms of what is true and what is false on the most momentous of all subjects, changes place with the necessary conception of its opposite? Can an all-

perfect lawgiver by sovereign prerogative make eternal truth falsehood, and eternal falsehood truth? Can he by sheer despotic authority set at defiance, transmute, abolish, every principle of eternal, immutable rectitude, and substitute its opposite in the actual, administration of his government; can he by his mere *sic volo* make myriads of beings one being, and yet each to retain his personal individuality -- make one perfectly holy being to deserve the legal penalty due only to these sinful myriads, and these sinful myriads perfectly righteous by the perfect righteousness of one, regard such an exploit and its effects as a reality, proceed to adjudicate the retributions of eternity on the basis of such transmutations, and yet reign in the glory of his justice and in the majesty of his authority?

Some may think that to ascribe such views and opinions to wise and good men, demands an apology. This however, will be thought only by those who know too little of the history of theological opinions to believe such errors credible, not to say probable. I have no apology to make for these representations except my own full conviction of their truth; I do not question what some may be disposed to call the sincerity, in their opinions, of this class of theologians; in other words, that they actually believe without due reflection what they so often and zealously affirm, and that they will in most cases continue thus to believe, because this will supersede the labor of further reflection.

The great desideratum is to show how law and grace can be reconciled -- how law in every essential element can be perfectly sustained and the transgressor be pardoned.

I remark then, that the law of God's moral government, immutable in its high authority, its holy claim, and its righteous sanctions, may exist in its absolute essential perfection as law, and through an atonement cease to be a rule of judgment to the transgressor, and its penalty for transgression be unexecuted, and the transgressor be justified. This must be admitted to be possible, or the pardon and justification of the transgressor under a perfect law would be an utter impossibility in the

nature of things.

Again: law, as appears from what has been already said, must be perfect in all its essential elements before it can be obeyed or disobeyed.

From the mere giving or existence of a perfect law, with its authority and claim fully sustained by the requisite sanctions, cannot be determined that any subject or subjects will be punished, for all may obey the law; nor that any will be rewarded, for all may disobey the law. Perfect law does not reward or punish its subjects as subjects, but only as obedient or disobedient. If the subject is obedient, the reward follows as a matter of justice; for the lawgiver, his kingdom, and the individual subject have a right that the obedient subject be rewarded. If the subject be disobedient under a merely legal system, then punishment follows as a matter of justice, not because the disobedient subject has a right to be punished, and thus a personal claim to be punished, but because the lawgiver has a right, and his kingdom has a right that the disobedient subject be punished. The lawgiver is pledged from the essential nature of his perfect law to protect all these rights, and to secure the objects of these rights to their possessors so far as it is possible to him. This is the essential and the entire function of his relation as a perfect lawgiver. Now these rights may be comprised in the right of the lawgiver to the obedience of every subject; in the right of the obedient subject to the legal reward; the right of the lawgiver to reign by sustaining the influence of his authority as a perfect ruler; his right to his own highest blessedness as this depends on the perfect and universal obedience and blessedness of his kingdom, and the right of his kingdom to its perfect blessedness. Of all these rights, with their objects, there is one, and only one, of which it can be said it is possible to him, from the nature of the best system, that of a perfect moral government, perfectly to secure, viz., his own right to reign as a perfect ruler. Free moral agents, as the subjects of a perfect moral government must be, must have power to disobey law, notwithstanding any power of the lawgiver to prevent their disobedience. If they disobey law, then the right of the lawgiver to their perfect and universal obedience, his right to his own perfect blessedness and that, of his kingdom, and the right of his kingdom to the perfect obedience and

blessedness of all, are hopelessly and forever violated. The objects of these rights can never be perfectly accomplished. Nothing can be substituted for the violation as an adequate redress of the evil done. I do not say that the evil cannot be redressed in some imperfect measure and degree. It is manifest however, that no complete or adequate redress for the evil can be conceived possible. To suppose it, is to suppose that the highest blessedness of God and of his kingdom should be secured by something besides the only thing which can secure it -- the perfect and universal obedience of all his subjects. The perfect protection and security of these rights in their objects and ends must be waived, abandoned, whatever partial redress of the evil be supposed. But, as I have said, there is another of the violated rights, which, notwithstanding disobedience, can be perfectly protected and secured; THE RIGHT OF THE LAWGIVER TO REIGN, OR HIS AUTHORITY AS A PERFECT RULER. This right can be upheld by the lawgiver himself, not by his subjects. This can be done by him, not as some suppose, by a sovereign act of absurdity and self-contradiction, but either by the execution of the penalty or by an atonement which shall sustain his authority as truly.

That the moral governor's authority would, in case of transgression, be fully sustained by the execution of the legal penalty, will not be denied or doubted. In like manner if a provision of grace, whether called an atonement, propitiation, or ransom, which nothing in the essential nature of law forbids, can be made, and which shall as perfectly sustain the authority of the lawgiver as the execution of the penalty, then can the pardon of transgression be made consistent with the perfect authority of the lawgiver. This provision made, the lawgiver evinces his right to reign, though every subject of his kingdom be in revolt. This provision made, all is done which it is requisite should be done, or which in the circumstances can be done, to sustain every right which the justice of the lawgiver requires him to sustain. In the atonement an equivalent for the execution of the penalty is provided, which fully sustains his right to reign, and secures the unimpaired influence of his authority. In sustaining this right and fully securing its object -- the influence of his authority -- he sustains so far as it is possible in the nature of things, every other right in the moral universe, and also the object of every such right. Transgression having occurred, and the lawgiver fully manifesting his perfect character

and thus sustaining his authority, he sustains his own right to the obedience of every subject, though through the fault of disobedient subjects, he does not, as he cannot perfectly secure the object of this right; he sustains fully the right of every obedient subject to the legal reward, though he does not, as he cannot secure the object of this right, because there is no obedient subject to receive the legal reward; he sustains his right to his own highest conceivable blessedness, though he does not, as he cannot secure the object of this right, because the perfect and universal obedience of his subjects is withheld; he sustains the right of his kingdom to its own highest blessedness, though he does not, as he cannot secure the object of this right, because of the disobedience of his subjects on which such blessedness depends. Thus the moral governor sustains every right of the moral universe by sustaining his own right to reign, i.e., his authority, and by securing the object of this right -- the actual influence of his authority through an atonement -- by sustaining this right of his own, and by securing its object through an atonement, as perfectly as he would by rewarding a perfectly obedient, or by punishing a perfectly disobedient kingdom.

And now if he finds good reasons for pardoning transgression, or rather if by so doing he can accomplish a far higher amount of good than by any other means, then why not pardon, accept and save as many transgressors on certain conditions prescribed by his wisdom and goodness, as the greatest good possible for him to secure may require? By so doing would his perfect moral character be concealed or impaired? Plainly not, for he accomplishes all the good he can. What more can be done? If less were done, who could trust, who adore? Can then his justice be impeached? Plainly not; for while he has violated no right of the pardoned transgressor, he has sustained and vindicated every right of his own and of his moral kingdom. Can his authority as a lawgiver or the authority of his law be questioned? Plainly not; for by the provision of an atonement he has fully sustained this authority. Can it be pretended that he has violated, sacrificed, abandoned any principle of rectitude, of truth, of justice, or goodness? Not surely in granting pardon and justification under the provision of a perfect atonement; for as we have seen, he appears in the full glory of his rightful dominion. Not surely in providing a perfect atonement, for there is no principle of rectitude, of law, justice, or

truth, which forbids such a provision, nor its effect in modifying the law of a merely legal system, so. that it shall cease to be a rule of judgment. The lawgiver in his law under a merely legal system, declares that under the existing system the transgressor shall die. But he neither declares nor says aught which implies that the particular system, and with it the law of the particular system, shall not be so changed or modified by an atonement, that while the sanctions of law remain in full force, the specific law itself of a merely legal system shall not cease to be a rule of judgment; and that while the legal necessity of executing its penal sanction in case of transgression shall also cease, his right or prerogative remains unimpaired to execute the legal penalty or not in any case of transgression, as it shall seem good in his sight. Otherwise the God of truth could never have provided the atonement, nor any atonement properly so called. Nor can it be pretended that the lawgiver by any influence of an atonement, separates from this perfect law its sanctions, or in any degree weakens their influence; for how does the moral governor in adopting this additional expedient for the purpose of sustaining his authority, take away or weaken the influence of -- existing sanctions? Is an addition a subtraction? If an atonement annihilates the sanction of law, or in any way renders it unjust to execute the penal sanction on any transgressor, then so far it does not uphold but annihilates law itself. In such a case, no matter how or by what means an atonement is made, whether it be based on a mystical union, on the imputation of sins or of righteousness, still it destroys law by separating sanctions from law, and so exempting the transgressor from a just exposure to penalty. Exemption from the penalty is accomplished by the atonement through the annihilation of law. The act of pardon and justification by the lawgiver and judge is therefore an absurdity and an impossibility. Besides, sanctions are not only essential elements of a perfect law, and as such essential to its authority and its existence, whether in certain circumstances they are executed or not, but in certain other circumstances eternal justice demands their execution. The perfectly obedient subject, if there be such a subject, must according to every principle of law and justice be rewarded. Nothing can divest law of its reward for the obedient subject. The disobedient subject of law, according to the same principle of law, must without faith be punished even under the provision of a perfect atonement. The certainty that the elect sinner will believe during his probation, affects not the truth of the proposition, that without faith the legal penalty must be executed on him,

which shows that the law has the same penalty according to its essential nature as law, which may justly be inflicted on both the elect and non-elect, though it will not be inflicted on the former, when both shall be judged by the law of faith.

Nor can the moral governor or his kingdom, acquire a right to the pardon of even a believing transgressor as the necessary and proper effect of an atonement. The atonement is not designed to create, nor can it create any new rights. New rights may indirectly result from it by, gratuitous promise to the Redeemer and to others; but the atonement as such, is designed simply to sustain one and only one existing right, and to secure its object -- the authority, of the moral governor or his right to reign. There is no other existing right in case of transgression, as we have seen, whose object an atonement can secure. The right of the moral governor, and that of his kingdom, to their own highest conceivable blessedness in respect to these objects of these rights are irretrievably marred by sin. To say when sin has taken place, that the atonement secures the objects of these rights in the highest possible degree, and so creates rights which did not before exist, is not true; for both these rights existed in absolute perfection before and without the provision of an atonement -- the right to the highest possible happiness conceivable, involving in each case the right to the highest possible happiness in all circumstances even when sin exists, while neither of these rights can be acquired as the effect of the atonement, nor could be alienated without an atonement. Besides, that the lawgiver cannot acquire his right to pardon the transgressor as the true and proper effect of the atonement, is evident from another consideration. When the atonement as such has fully sustained the authority, of law as it must, there is yet another thing necessary to the lawgiver's right to pardon even one transgressor; for the act of pardon must not only be rendered consistent with the authority of the lawgiver, but consistent also with the general good. But the pardon of the transgressor without faith or personal holiness would not be consistent, but inconsistent with the general good, and the lawgiver can have no right which is inconsistent with the general good. The atonement as such, therefore, cannot result in the right of the lawgiver to pardon the transgressor, but must produce its whole effect in sustaining the authority of the lawgiver. Nor can the atonement as such be the ground of pardon,

either directly or indirectly, by, being a manifestation of the love of God to a sinful world, and as such a manifestation, having a reclaiming tendency or influence; for it is only as a complete and perfect atonement, that it becomes such a manifestation of love as it is, and thus acquires its reclaiming influence. An effect is no part of the essential nature of its cause. The atonement then must be complete in its essential nature, and so fully sustain the authority of the lawgiver, or it cannot manifest the love of the lawgiver to sinful men, or possess the least reforming tendency. Is it then said, that an atonement must be a designed substitute for the punishment of the pardoned sinner? But surely a perfect law giver can design to substitute nothing for this punishment except a complete and perfect atonement; except that which as its full effect sustains the lawgiver's authority. The design thus to substitute it, cannot therefore be essential to its completeness or perfection as an atonement, but must result solely from its completeness as an atonement.

Nor yet -- and most of all -- can an atonement render it unjust, as some suppose, to an elect transgressor to punish him. Every transgressor, elect or non-elect, deserves to be punished, and, therefore may be as justly punished under an atonement as were no atonement provided. He deserves to be punished, not on the ground of having the absurd right to be punished, but solely on the ground of having violated the rights of the moral governor and of his kingdom -- rights which are eternal and immutable, and which, with one grand exception, God's right to reign -- a right protected by God, and not by the transgressor -- are eternally frustrated in their objects by transgression. Nor can the transgressor be supposed to acquire, as the effect of an atonement merely, the absurd right to be exempted from the legal penalty, according to any principle of law or justice. To suppose this, is to suppose that as the effect of an atonement merely, he acquires and sustains some new personal relation to law, to justice, and to the general good, which renders his exemption from punishment his due; for no being, except on the ground of such a relation, can possess a right to any blessing as his due. To exempt one then from a deserved penalty who has a right to such exemption, is not an act of pardon or forgiveness, but an act of rendering to him what is his due, what can be justly claimed on his part, what cannot be withheld from him without flagrant injustice to him; in a word, it is an act of justice. Thus

to exempt one from a deserved penalty who has a right to the exemption, is to exempt from punishment one who ought injustice to be punished, and who ought not in justice to be punished -- who deserves to be punished, and does not deserve to be punished -- the doing of which defies all power and all prerogative. Besides, the transgressor can deserve punishment simply and solely on the ground that the rights of the moral governor, and the rights of his kingdom -- rights which in their very nature are immutable and eternal -- that these must with one exception remain violated by the transgressor, and be thus frustrated in their objects for evermore. He has done this deed. He has done what he could to frustrate every right of the moral universe, and to fill this universe with the woes of sin instead of the joys of perfect and universal holiness: he had successfully accomplished the result, had not God by atonement and grace interposed his influence to prevent the dire catastrophe. And now can ill-desert be separated from such an act or from its author? Can the relation of the cause to its effect be separated from the former? Can these momentous rights of God and of his kingdom, thus irretrievably and eternally frustrated in their objects by the transgressor, be looked upon in their ruins, known and thought of by himself and by every rational and knowing being, and the ill-desert of such a deed not be necessarily and infallibly known by all to be, forever inseparable from its perpetrator? Can such a moral being become sinless, free from ill-desert in the sight of God, of man, of truth? Not while he is immortal. Ill-desert once incurred by the act of the transgressor, is not an appendage which can be laid aside or separated from his act. This is admitted by, the doctrine of imputed sin. And if it cannot be separated from the act, no more can it be from the actor. The act when done is in its nature and tendency, and as a cause of its actual effect, all in ill-desert that it ever can be. It cannot be changed by being made a less evil than it is; and however the full effect of the act in the destruction of all rights is restricted and limited by the interposition of the lawgiver, the ill-desert of the act or of the actor is not thereby either lessened or taken away. For a perfect atonement enthrones law and the lawgiver, not by rendering it unjust to punish, but by rendering it not unjust, that is, consistent with justice to pardon the transgressor. Thus the sanctions of God's law, the terrors of his justice, and the withering abhorrence of his holiness for sin, in their unobscured and awful manifestation, are combined with the full effulgence of his love and mercy in all their attractions and charms to a revolted world. These are the wonders of the cross. It is this vision of God which will make the

heaven of the redeemed. The ill-desert of sin will not be regarded as a thing that was and is not, nor yet forgotten or unthought of, in one note of that song to the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne -- much less will a right to pardon and eternal life be claimed in that song. Will that persecutor and blasphemer, that chief of sinners who said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ;" and again, "By the grace of God I am what I am;" and again, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord;" will this man whose life as an apostle was one hallelujah of praise to his Redeemer here on earth, forget this song on his throne above? Will he ever forget his present ill-desert, or deny that the justice of God as a lawgiver might cast him down from his throne to the doom he deserves? Can such theology be in heaven? The claim of right to heaven's reward, no matter on what it were founded, would chill and break every heart and cause the praises of redeeming love to cease. No mystical union, no imputation of sins and of righteousness, no works of law, no legal righteousness, will be set to music in that world. Sinners there appreciate the mercy which confers eternal life on those who deserve eternal death. They wish not to forget their ill-desert. It is the cherished remembrance of it, with its contrition, which inspires their gratitude, their joys and their praises; nor would heaven be heaven to them, could they not cast their crowns at the feet of Him "on whose head are many crowns."

In confirmation of our present leading proposition, that the law of God is immutable in its sanctions, much more might be said on the authority of the Scriptures. Indeed the proof meets us as it were in every part of the sacred volume. It is so various, so multiform, and so obviously decisive, that while it would be tedious, it is quite unnecessary to attempt any exhibition of it in its particular forms and fullness. What I further propose at present, is in a brief way to call attention to some of the more striking facts of God's providence, in which he must be viewed as having begun the execution of the penal sanction of his law.

Man then at his creation was placed under law by his Maker, with the sanctions of eternal life and eternal death. This law as a perfect rule of action, involved nothing less in requirement than that spirit of loyalty which is due to the all perfect Being from creatures made in his own image, and of course was nothing less than what our Saviour has called

"THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT OF THE LAW." This law, considered as a perfect rule of action, was virtually given to God's entire moral creation, and of course thus given as the law of requirement to the whole race of human beings, as binding on them from the commencement of their future moral and accountable existence. God however, had in his high counsels determined not only that our first parents should be the progenitors of a numerous race, but also that this whole race should become the subjects of this perfect rule of action from the commencement of their moral agency and commence their moral character by transgressing this perfect law. Our first parents had no sooner transgressed this perfect law than the promise of redemption was revealed, and they and the whole race of their descendants were placed under an economy of mercy -- an economy under which the latter were to commence not only their moral relations to their Maker but also their moral character in sin. Was then the perfect law of God repealed, or its essential sanctions separated from it? Was it thus annulled as an authoritative rule of action by grace? Was the law as law impaired in its essential perfection and force, so that the transgressor aside from grace was not fully exposed to its penalty? Then were grace in redemption a solecism -- a redemption from a legal penalty when there was no such penalty which could be executed. Redemption then necessarily implies a law with a penalty, which from the very nature of law must be executed on every transgressor, unless its execution be prevented by his compliance with the condition of pardoning mercy.

And now how prominently and impressively is all this presented throughout the whole patriarchal history! Who had not transgressed the law of God? Not one. Who was delivered from its fearful penalty? Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Lot -- those and those only who in faith offered sacrifice to God, emblematical of the real and all-sufficient atonement of the promised seed -- the Son of God. What became of all other men? Let the deluge answer which engulfed a world; let the tempest of fire which destroyed the cities of the plain. These according to Christ and his apostles, were examples suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Thus in the beginning of this world's history, the actual execution of the legal penalty of sin has been averted from those only who by faith have relied on the great sacrifice of redemption, while the execution of this penalty

has been begun before the eyes of men in all those innumerable cases in which temporal death in God's vindictive judgments has been known to come upon men in their sins. And now is there no penalty as a legal sanction pertaining immutably to God's law -- penalty which can be averted from the transgressor only by accepting the great sacrifice of redemption, with the acknowledgment of the just desert of that penalty? Is the law of God as law -- I do not say as a particular kind of law -- modified in the least respect; especially is it not distinctly, and as it were in fact sensibly manifest, enthroned in its full authority by its essential penal sanction? And if we follow the history of God and of man in this world as given by revelation, from the calling of Abraham, in the deliverance of his descendants from Egypt, in the giving to Israel of the law on Mount Sinai, and in his administration of this law itself as their national king and national deity; or rather if we view this theocracy as a system representing God's moral government over men as moral beings -- for otherwise it is nothing but a system of beggarly elements -- what do we find in this history of God and man but God in sensible manifestation, presenting himself constantly, almost exclusively, in the premature temporal death of men as transgressors of the Mosaic law, by war, by famine, by pestilence, every instance of which stands forth as an instance of vindictive wrath, of death in sin -- eternal death? These things were done through many, many long centuries -- done not only in the view of Israel, but of all the nations of men. If now we pass to the righteous judgment of God in the destruction of this people who crucified their Messiah -- the most signal expression of wrath which God ever made in this world, and view it as we must, the beginning of his vindictive wrath never to end what do we find but God revealing himself by facts manifest to sense, in the execution of the penalty of his law on impenitent and unbelieving men? And now in view of these facts, will it be pretended. that the penalty of God's law is separated or separable from it, so long as it is law in its essential nature? Nothing plainly has separated the penalty of the law from the law itself in respect to those on whom this very penalty is executed. Has anything produced this effect in respect to those who as a further effect, are exempted from this evil through grace? This implies that the evil as a legal penalty, is in respect to this class, separated from the law before their exemption from the evil. Of course such are not exempted from the penalty of law, but from an evil which had before been but has now ceased to be a penalty of law. They are not pardoned; they are not forgiven; they are not justified

according to any principles of law, for the law has been annihilated in its sanctions, and of course wholly annihilated that they may be exempted from what was once its just penalty, but is so no longer in respect to them. No matter on what supposed grounds or reasons this is done -- whether by mystical unions by imputation, by atonement, by faith, by any one or all these combined -- if by the separation of the penalty of law from law itself, the transgressor is exempted from this evil, he is not and cannot be said to be exempted from a legal penalty, for there is no legal penalty from which exemption is conceivable, but forgiveness, remission, pardon, justification by grace in respect to a transgressor of law, are words without meaning.

But it cannot be necessary to dwell longer on this subject. Any view of God's sovereignty, of mystical union, of imputation or atonement, which separates from God's perfect law its penal sanction in respect to a transgressor, annihilates that law for the transgressor's benefit.

Here too it might be shown that the whole system of redemption as revealed in the Gospel in all its grace and mercy, is according to this view of law wholly subverted. For what can be plainer than that if by some mysterious, unheard-of maneuver or process, a lawgiver could and should, in his sovereignty, constitute in reality and truth a multitude of disobedient subjects of his law, and another sinless or perfectly obedient subject of his law, ONE MORAL PERSON, so that the moral character, and with it all the legal relations of the former as transgressors should cease to be theirs and become those of the obedient subject, and so further, that the moral character of the latter, and with it all his legal relations as a perfectly obedient subject, should cease to be his and become those of the transgressors -- I ask if these things were -- done, where would be the grace, the mercy, the forgiveness, the pardon, the gratuitous justification of the Gospel? So far as acts of grace and mercy to the transgressor are concerned, these consist in some sovereign acts of necromancy called constituting a mystical union, imputation -- justly and on grounds of ill-desert inflicting legal penalty on a perfectly obedient subject, by which all personal sins and ill-desert of the transgressor cease to be his own and become another's, and all the perfect personal

obedience and merit of another become his. Here cease the acts of grace and mercy toward the transgressor. What more grace or mercy does he need? What more are possible in his case? But in all this there is no forgiveness or remission of sins, no pardon, no gratuitous justification, nor yet the least preparation or ground for the possibility of either, but only a preparation for him who was once a transgressor, to come free from all ill-desert, all guilt, all just exposure to legal penalty, free from sin and perfectly obedient to law, and demand as matter of absolute right and justice, on the ground of personal merit, the acceptance and favor of the lawgiver. Is this pardoning or forgiving iniquity? Is any such use of language to be found in Hebrew, Greek or Latin -- in any human language? Did a human being ever ask God or another human being to pardon his offense or his sin, meaning that it should be done by the process of mystical union, imputation, and by so giving him a personal claim -- a claim *de merito*, a claim of right and justice -- to favor on the ground of his absolute faultiness and the fulfillment of every obligation? Is this "justifying the ungodly?" Is this being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus? Or is it the subversion of the entire system of grace and mercy revealed in the Gospel?

LECTURE IX: THE NATURE OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT AS REVEALED.

Section 2: the law a rule of action and not of judgment -- Error on this point. -- Law as a rule of action never called law in the Scriptures. -- All men are under it, however. -- All men, in fact, condemned by it, but not judged by it as yet. -- Objections considered. -- Position confirmed by a view of the facts of the Scriptures. -- Section 3: The law, in requiring obedience, prohibits disobedience, and vice versa. -- Distinction made by theologians, untenable from the nature of law. -- Impossible to be applied to a subject of law. -- Introduced to justify another; viz., that between the active and passive obedience of Christ. -- Source In the use of negative terms. -- Denied in the Scriptures.

HAVING, in the preceding section, considered the law of God as immutable in its authority, its claim, its sanctions, I now propose to consider it --

Sect. 2. -- As a rule of action, and not a rule of judgment.

My proposition may be more fully stated thus: That the word law, when applied in the manner now under consideration, though used in the Scriptures to denote God's rule of action, requiring of men the whole duty, is never in this application used to denote the rule of judgment.

Error in respect to this part of the subject, has, I apprehend, been a source of other errors, and on this account requires correction. In many, not to say in most of those languages into which the Scriptures have been translated, as well as in that in which the New Testament was written, the word law may be said to denote a rule of judgment as well as an authoritative rule of action. This may be said to be the common and proper meaning of the word with all nations except the Hebrews. Hence it is not to be wondered at, that one peculiarity in the Hebrew use of the word should be overlooked by at least many of the translators and expounders of the sacred writings. Indeed, it is difficult, if not impossible, in some cases to avoid conceiving and speaking of the law of God's moral government over men, without conceiving it as unmodified by an economy of grace. In this use the word denotes -- and for aught I Bee, is and must be used to denote for certain necessary purposes universal, authoritative rule of action and of judgment to its subjects; thus requiring of them all that which as moral beings they ought to do, as the only condition of acceptance and favor on the part of the lawgiver. This I shall find it convenient to speak of as law in the classic sense of the word, or in other forms of language which shall distinguish it from law as including an economy of grace. The reality of such a law, in this full and precise meaning, must be admitted. Its comprehensive nature, what it is not and what it is, I have attempted largely to unfold in preceding lectures. Nor can we even form any just or adequate conception of an economy of grace, without forming this conception of law under such a system of moral government as that which, without an economy of grace, would and must exist over the moral creation of God.

This law of God's moral government, as both a rule of action and of

judgment, is the law of benevolent action -- that law which the Saviour calls (not law, but) "the first and great commandment of the law." "The second," as he tells us, "is like unto it." These for certain purposes may be distinguished from each other as he has distinguished them. They may also be understood as one; the former as including in all ordinary cases the latter, together with such particular precepts for the regulation of subordinate acts and doings as in the variable circumstances of men become right and wrong, though, as before explained, never morally right and wrong. Under this law, God, as we have seen, placed our first parents in Paradise, requiring obedience to the first and great commandment, in instituting the holy rest and worship of the Sabbath, and obedience to the second in their social relations; while the positive prohibition, which they violated, bespoke his supreme and rightful sovereignty, and was clothed, as were the others, with all the majesty of law as a rule of action and a rule of judgment, sustained by eternal sanctions.

But here the question arises, Is this rule of action and of judgment -- this law of God's moral government -- in this full meaning, ever called law, or spoken of as an actually existing law of God, in the Scriptures? I admit and maintain that enough is said of it in the Scriptures to unfold its nature and import, and to render proper the application to it of the word law, in this most absolute or fullest import. (Vide Gen. ii. 16; iii. 11; Rom. v. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 14.) The formal enactment in Gen. ii. 16, and the sentence, "unto condemnation," after its transgression, though not a sentence dooming our first parents and their posterity to bear the full penalty threatened, are decisive that our first parents were placed under this rule as a law in the most absolute sense of the word. The reason that it is never expressly called law as an existing reality, is not that it ceased to be an authoritative rule of action to men; nor that men by transgression did not deserve its full penalty; nor that without redemption through the promised seed they must not incur such a doom. But I would ask, whether the reason of this fact may not be this: that this rule of action and of judgment was no longer what it had been to Adam before his apostasy, nor what it would be to his descendants were they to live and act under a merely legal system, but that as a rule of judgment, in all its fearfulness, it was superseded by that of the Gospel? (Rom. ii. 16; John, iii. 15; Heb. xii. 18;

John, v. 22, 27; 2 Thess. i. 8; 1 Tim. i. 11.) Was it not of high practical importance to divest the minds of sinful men of the thought, that they were in the absolute sense under this law as a rule of judgment, and to convince them that "there is forgiveness with God, that he may be feared?" Would this have been easily accomplished, had this law been held up to human contemplation as a rule of judgment? Has it not ever been difficult to possess the human mind of the idea that a rule of action is not necessarily also a rule of judgment?

Whatever opinion we may form upon these points, it seems quite undeniable that the word law, since the fall of man and the promise of the Redeemer, cannot be used in divine revelation to denote the law of God's moral government as an actually existing rule of judgment to this sinful world. The reason is, that this law is not nor can it be a rule of judgment under an economy of grace.

On this point let me not be misunderstood. I am not saying that the whole world are not, and have not always been, under the law of God's moral government as a rule of action. As such a rule -- as a requirement of what ought to be done -- it is a rule of constants universal, unchangeable, and eternal obligation upon every subject of God's moral dominion. Nor is this all that can with truth nor all that need be said of it. It is such a rule that all men, having transgressed it, are already under its just condemnation; so far under its condemnation, that if tried by it and judged by it and by nothing else, they would and must be actually condemned, and sentenced to bear its full penalty. Such a result must follow such a trial that the authority of the law might be sustained. But there has been no such trial of any human being, nor any necessity for it. The authority of this law, which is its whole influence, has been, as we have seen, fully preserved and established by the great propitiation of the Son of God. (Rom. iii. 31.)

While then it is conceded that all men are thus under the law of God's moral government; under it as a rule of action with unimpaired obligation; under it as imparting a knowledge of sin and just condemnation; under it

as a rule of judgment so far that they must be doomed to bear its full penalty, unless deliverance comes from some other source than the law itself; it is still maintained that they are not under it as a rule of judgment, according to which on the great day of account their final allotment is to be fixed. If this were so then none can be justified or saved; for he who is judged and sentenced according to this law, and who has transgressed it as all men have, must bear its penalty. Nor will it be pretended, at least by any Protestant, that this law is a rule of judgment to believers -- to them who obey the Gospel. For then how can they be justified? Is it then a rule of judgment to unbelievers -- to them who do not obey the Gospel? But where do the Scriptures teach that unbelievers are to be judged and condemned on the last day, by the law of God's moral government? How does this comport with the Saviour's declaration, "He that believeth not is condemned already" [not because he has disobeyed the law], "because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God?" Besides, is any thing more plainly taught in the Scriptures than that all men, Jew and Gentile, shall be judged on the final day according to the Gospel? (Rom. ii. 16.) Nor does this imply that the unbelieving are not under condemnation for the sin and guilt of transgressing the law of God's moral government, so far as they can be without the final and decisive act of the judge; nor that they will not as unbelievers be actually doomed to bear the penalty of this law, when tried and sentenced by the Gospel. Surely the Gospel exempts no unbelieving transgressor of this law from the execution of its penalty. All men come to the judgment-seat in the common character of transgressor, of this law, condemned by it as law, self-condemned, not to be convicted of their transgression by trial, but knowing that they are worthy of the death which is, the legal penalty. Every mouth is stopped with an overwhelming sense of guilt, and the way fully prepared without trial, or judgment, or sentence, for the execution of the legal penalty. For aught that appears from the Scriptures, God (were there no other fact to be decided except that men are transgressors of this law) might execute its penalty without a judgment-day, and still sufficiently manifest his justice. Or if not, if there would be a necessity that all should be tried by the violated law as a rule of judgment, then all must be condemned to bear its penalty. To say otherwise, or to say all that can with truth be said in the present case, viz., that thus tried by the law, all must be doomed to bear its penalty, unless as tried by the Gospel also, they shall be exempted from this penalty, is to say that this law is not the rule of judgment by which their final allotment is to be determined.

Indeed, how can this law be the rule of judgment to any? In respect to all men, with the common character of transgressors of this law and the common condition of just exposure to its penalty, the sentence of the law is suspended by a gracious economy, or rather has been so set aside, that the connection between transgression and punishment may be dissolved by the subject's own act, and that not a human being need be fixed in his final allotment by this law as a rule of judgment. Another probation than that under law as a rule of judgment has been instituted for all, and another trial than that according to law awaits all under a provision of grace, which nothing can annul. The judge cannot condemn and so doom a transgressor of this law to bear its penalty, according to this law as a rule of judgment, without contravening his own ordinance of grace. The final question is then, not what saith the violated law to all transgressors as a rule of judgment. It has already said one and the same thing concerning all. It has given to all the knowledge of sin and of merited condemnation, and so stopped every mouth. Its decision in respect to men is so far final and needs no repetition. But does the Gospel assume in its provisions and proffers of grace, that this law has thus actually condemned any? What then is its redemption (2 Peter, ii. 1) provided for all men? Besides, if this law has actually condemned any as sinners, it has actually condemned all; and what then is that Gospel which with its provisions of grace is to be preached to every creature?

Is it here said that none will be condemned at last, except those who have transgressed this law? True; but how does this prove that any will be judged by this law, and condemned because they have transgressed it, when all through grace may escape such a trial and its doom and when not one can or will be thus condemned, nor condemned at all, except he disbelieves the Gospel, or at least the proffered grace of God to both Jew and Gentile? Surely the fact of transgressing law decides nothing in respect to any, either for justification or sanctification, and therefore decides nothing concerning the future allotment of men as transgressors of law. On the contrary, the final decision of the Saviour of the world has fixed the terms of life and death once for all: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." What can be plainer than that the final, the determining

question in respect to each transgressor of this law -- a question on the decision of which the eternal issue wholly depends -- is, has he believed the Gospel or has he not, has he obeyed the Gospel or has he not? If he has, the non-execution of the legal penalty being conditioned on his believing is arrested -- averted; and he being tried and judged is also justified according to the Gospel -- that is, according to the principles of a gracious economy. If he has not, the execution of the legal penalty being conditioned on his unbelief, is not arrested or averted, and he being tried and judged is condemned according to the Gospel. And now what is the determining cause or reason of the justification of the one? Plainly his faith in the Gospel! What is the determining cause or reason of the condemnation of the other? Plainly his disbelief of the Gospel! Had the believer not believed, he had been condemned. Had the unbeliever believed, he had been justified.

Is it said that no transgressor of law can be doomed to bear its penalty unless he be tried, judged, and condemned according to law? But the Gospel proceeds on the opposite assumption -- that the transgressor of law must bear the legal penalty, unless he be delivered from it when tried and judged according to the Gospel. Besides, the law itself demands no such trial or process as that now supposed for the specified purpose. It demands no execution of its penalty, to uphold its authority, which is the only conceivable reason for demanding it. The atonement of the Son of God upholds its authority in absolute perfection, and thus wholly removes the necessity for this legal process by removing every reason for it. The end or object of a trial is, not to determine who can and who cannot be justified consistently with the authority, and with all the principles of law, for all can be; but to determine who can, and who cannot be justified consistently with other interests of benevolence -- interests with which the justification of the sinner becomes consistent by his faith or personal holiness. On this condition the Gospel proclaims a complete amnesty to all men in respect to legal penalty; and the question is, whether being as every one is a transgressor of the law, when judged as he must be according to the Gospel, he shall be condemned by the Gospel? If so, the law takes its course, and the transgressor has to bear the deserved penalty of the law with the superadded curse of the Gospel. Nor is there any other way, or mode in which he can be sentenced to bear the penalty

of the law; for if we suppose him to be judged by the law and convicted of being a transgressor of law, still he could not be doomed to bear its penalty without being also tried and judged by the Gospel, and thus being convicted of having rejected the Gospel by unbelief, and in this way only incurring the penalty of the law.

While all men are then under the law of God's moral government as a perfect rule of moral action, and while none can escape its just penalty except by faith in the Gospel, they are not under it as a rule of judgment by which their future allotment is to be determined. If these things are so, it follows that the word law can never be used in the Scriptures to denote the law of God's moral government as both a rule of action and of judgment.

Again, it may, be said, as it often has been, that when the subject of God's law transgresses that law, he falls at once under its just condemnation, or that he is at once condemned by the law. Such forms of language are often used by theologians. But is not such language very equivocal -- is it not often used in one meaning and then in another meaning by the same writer, without his being aware of the fact -- and hence often used in a meaning in which in its proper meaning it is not true? If then it mean that the transgressor of law is justly condemned by the law, so far as he can be without the act of the judge condemning him to bear the penalty of the law; or that he is exposed, so far as any principle of law is concerned, to a just or merited condemnation by the judge; or that judged and sentenced according to law, he must be condemned to bear its penalty, the truth of this I have already conceded. But if it mean that the transgressor of law is, according to law, necessarily and hopelessly condemned to bear its penalty, so that through an adequate atonement there can be no authorized hope of escaping the penalty, or so that the proffer of pardon may not instantly follow the act of transgression -- this I deny, as contrary to the revealed fact in the case of our first parents, and of all their surviving descendants. According to one of these meanings of the language, if true there can be no economy of grace, while the truth of the other is the only possible ground of such an economy. The difference in these meanings of language is then of

fundamental importance. That use of it in which one meaning in the mind of a writer is confounded with the other, or that in which the two meanings specified are not precisely distinguished, is only to begin and end in confusion of thought respecting one of the most material truths on the subject. And yet how few of one large class of commentators on Paul's Epistle to the Romans, especially on the 5th chapter, have not either confounded the two meanings of this form of language, or rather used it to mean the act of God condemning men actually to bear the penalty of his law! If this be so, of what avail is redemption by the Son of God?

Let us now look at the various dispensations of God toward the human race at different periods. From the apostasy of man and the promise of a Redeemer, we find in all the Scriptures no formal express promulgation of the law of God's moral government as a rule of judgment to this sinful world. During the whole patriarchal dispensation, that is, from Adam to Moses (Rom. v. 14), we find Revelation silent in respect to this law, even as a rule of action, and of course as a rule of judgment. We find sin abounding as the transgression of this law, and its prevalence recognized in the severity of divine judgments, or rather in the execution of its penalty begun in the destruction of the world by a deluge, and afterward of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone (Jude, ver.7). And yet how impressively in both cases is the great truth of Gospel grace unfolded! Righteous Noah and his family are safe in the ark; righteous Lot is delivered in the overthrow of the cities of the plains, and had there been ten righteous there, i.e., righteous by faith, these cities had not been destroyed. Here then is a revelation of the doctrine of justification by faith -- of the relation of the "obedience of faith" in averting the wrath and securing the favor of God. We find sin also -- sin as the transgression of law -- not less truly recognized by all the generation of the righteous, as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, &c., especially in their "offerings and burnt-offerings for sins." We find various divine commands and directions for the regulation of human conduct, but no full, formal, promulgation of the law of God's moral government. Still, we find sin and the knowledge of sin as meriting condemnation, ever distinctly recognized. But we find so far as the language of Revelation is concerned, not the law of God's moral government presented as the rule of judgment, but instead and prominently, the placability and the mercy of God to the guilty. We find

this law clearly implied as a rule of action, and duty for men as moral beings, who had transgressed it -- a law according to which they might be justly judged and justly condemned; but we find even for such beings, not a rule of judgment in this law, but a rule of judgment provided by grace -- provided in "the law of faith," and the question of man's acceptance or condemnation to be, not whether he has transgressed the law of God's moral government, but whether he has obeyed the law of faith. In a word, we find clearly implied the perfect law of God's moral government in all its authority and influence as a rule of action, and we also find an economy of grace. The latter implies sin as the transgression of the former, but wholly precludes it as a rule of judgment.

Accordingly, if we now advert to the most signal event under this dispensation -- the calling of Abraham, and especially to the covenant (Gal. iii. 8) which God made with this father of the faithful -- we find no promulgation of the law of God's moral government, but the economy of grace more fully disclosed in the import of its conditions, in the superiority of its typical priesthood, and in the riches of its grace: in the import of its condition, for the patriarch's faith is counted for righteousness (Gen. xv. 6); in the superiority of its typical priesthood, for the name of the priest is "king of righteousness;" in the riches of its grace, for its promise is, "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." I cannot but here remark, how divinely fitted was this method of God's revealing himself to men, to lead them to a compliance with the conditions of his gracious covenant. Instead of the formal promulgation of law with its sanctions of reward and penalty, and thus destroying hope through conscious guilt, or fostering self-righteousness through the perversion of human pride, that law was known at most as a rule of action written on the conscience, and through the execution of its penalty by terrible judgments on men in their sins, who by faith might have averted this issue. God too, was ever making abundant and decisive manifestations of his tender mercy to men but imperfectly good men who, though justly deserving condemnation by law, became righteous by repentance and faith. How could the wicked expect to escape the judgment of God? If they did, how must they brave the peculiar terrors of the merciful dispensation of God by despising the riches of his goodness, and after their hardness and impenitent heart treasure up wrath against the day of wrath!

We now pass to another signal change in God's dispensation -- a change wrought not by abrogating the Abrahamic covenant or abating aught from its provisions or promises of grace, but by introducing another covenant founded on far inferior promises. The descendants of Abraham with the rest of the world are now wholly given to idolatry. They have been long in Egypt, and are thoroughly Egyptianized. The designs and efforts of God's mercy and grace toward them are apparently baffled, but they are not abandoned. He delivers them from the bondage into which he had carried them for their sins, and by his outstretched arm conducts them through the Red Sea and the wilderness to Mount Sinai. Here he makes with them another covenant (a _____ institution), and under it as a peculiar system, separates this people from all other nations in the land of Canaan, and perpetuates their existence as a nation with various revolutions and changes, until it had served the high purpose of introducing the reign of their Messiah over them and over the world.

This system, as we have seen, was a theocracy -- a system of national government, of which God was the national king and tutelary deity, adopted with the comprehensive design of recovering this people from polytheism, and of representing the higher system revealed to Abraham, which it could not disannul -- the system of God's moral government over men as moral beings under an economy of grace. Here I have occasion only to call to your remembrance two important things. The one is, that God in establishing this theocracy and assuming the relation of the national king of Israel, did, like every other national king, as became him, require a spirit of loyalty on the part of his subjects -- i. e., he clearly revealed the perfect law of his moral government as the rule of action, though not as a rule of judgment. The other is, that as a representative system it taught that God, with the authority of the law of his moral government unimpaired, was still administering that government under a gracious economy, so that with nothing abated of this law as a rule of duty, there was yet another rule of judgment for men revealed in the covenant made with Abraham and his seed forever, even "the law of faith."

Thus we see, that in all the dispensations of God toward men, the law of his perfect moral government has since the apostasy been so modified by an economy of grace, that while its force of obligation is not weakened, it has not lost one iota of its authority or influence as a rule of action, while its penalty will be executed on every unbeliever when judged by the Gospel; still, not this law, but the Gospel, will be the rule of judgment to this sinful world on the last day. In accordance with these things, we find, that while the only rule, which is both a rule of action and of judgment to men, is in the Scriptures called law -- "the law of faith" -- the only possible rule of judgment, and therefore of justifying and condemning sinful men under an economy of grace, the word law is never applied in the Scriptures to the law of God's moral government over men as moral beings, to denote an existing rule of action and of judgment.

Sect. 3. -- The proposition next to be maintained is, that the law of God in requiring obedience prohibits disobedience, and in prohibiting disobedience, requires obedience. The importance of presenting this as an essential principle of law does not arise from the unobvious truth of the principle, nor from any want of its admission in practical life, so much as from the assumption and use of the opposite principle in theology. Who but theologians have ever thought that a subject of law could be obedient to law without being not disobedient, or disobedient to law without being not obedient? Many theologians since the Reformation, modifying the view of Anselm, which in literal language represents sin as a debt, have maintained that the transgressor of law incurs two debts -- the *debitum poenae* and the *debitum negligentiae*. Their theory is, that the transgressor of law not only transgresses but fails to obey the law; that by his transgression he incurs its penalty, and by his failure to obey forfeits its reward. Hence the advocates of this theory have been led to the distinction between what they call the active obedience of Christ -- his obedience to the law, and his passive obedience -- his voluntary submission to sufferings and death. Hence again, they maintain that the *debitum poenae* incurred by transgressing law, is canceled by the passive obedience of Christ, and the *debitum negligentiae* incurred by the want of obedience, is canceled by his active obedience.

This view of the nature of law I claim to be wholly groundless and forbidden. The known nature of the subject decisively shuts off this interpretation. The question respects the meaning of the word law, *de usu loquendi*. There is not any word better understood by mankind the world over, than this word in its present application. Every one knows that law is such a rule of action, that its subject acting under it either obeys or disobeys it. As a line cannot be conceived which is not either straight or crooked, so a subject of law acting in this relation, cannot be conceived who is not either obedient or disobedient. He cannot be conceived to want obedience without being conceived to be disobedient, nor to want disobedience without being conceived to be obedient. The want of obedience without disobedience, and the want of disobedience without obedience, may be truly predicated of a book, a table, or any thing else which is not a subject of law. But neither the want of obedience without disobedience, nor the want of disobedience without obedience, can, with a shade of truth, be predicated of a subject of law acting in this relation. A man may be either wise or foolish, but he cannot be both. So a subject of law may be either obedient or disobedient, but he cannot be both. If therefore he is not obedient, he is disobedient, and if he is not disobedient he is obedient.

Further, what would be the relation of a subject of law, who, under its ceaseless claim for his obedience, can be viewed as without obedience and yet not disobedient; or as without disobedience and yet not obedient? Should it here be said that neither of these two relations of the subject of law is supposable in re or in reality, then I ask, Why is it supposed? If there is nothing in the nature of law nor in the relation of its subject, to hinder his standing in one of the supposed relations without the other, why may he not be supposed in reality so to stand? If the so-called passive obedience of Christ can, according to the nature and principles of law place its subject in the relation of one who is not disobedient, without placing him in the relation of one who is obedient, or, as some would say, in the relation of one who is pardoned but not justified, who shall say that transgressors of law are not often placed in this relation to law? And what shall be said of the condition of such transgressors of law? The law cannot demand their punishment, for they are pardoned: it cannot acquiesce in their acceptance and reward, for

they are not justified. If they are summoned to the judgment-seat in this condition, what shall be their allotment? Does the law of God, in one of its essential principles, recognize a purgatory?

Again: should the subject of law from the beginning, perfectly obey the law, his obedience would secure the twofold effect of a title to reward and exemption from penalty. Should the subject disobey the law, his disobedience would secure the twofold effect of the loss of reward and of exposure to penalty. But now, if the disobedient subject can according to law, be exempted from penalty without being secured in the reward, why may not the obedient subject be secured in the reward without being secured in the exemption from penalty? If it be said that security in the reward of an obedient subject of law, necessarily in the nature of the case involves security in exemption from penalty, I answer, so does exemption from penalty on the part of a disobedient subject of law necessarily, in the nature of the case, involve security in his reward. If then something more than that which is necessary to exempt the disobedient subject from the penalty is necessary to his securing the reward, then something more than that which is necessary to secure the obedient subject in his reward is necessary to secure his exemption from penalty. We cannot indeed, suppose that a stone should be either an obedient or disobedient subject of the law of God's moral government, nor of course, that as either, it should be rewarded or punished. But man is a subject of this law. As such he is either an obedient or disobedient subject, and must sustain all the relations of one or the other. That therefore, which secures to him the reward of this law, must exempt him from its penalty; and that which exempts him from its penalty, must secure to him its reward.

Again: according to the theory now opposed, there are in the justification of the sinner two causes supposed, each resulting in its own distinct effect, while either cause must produce both effects. Thus, according to this theory, the passive obedience of Christ results in or is the cause of the justified sinner's exemption from punishment. Here then is one cause, and its own and exclusive effect. Again: the active obedience of Christ results in or is the cause of the justified sinner's acceptance and reward as its own exclusive effect. But according to the essential nature of law,

nothing can exempt the transgressor from the penalty of law but his obedience to law, which also secures his reward. The active obedience of Christ then, in gratuitous justification supplying the want of obedience to law or paying the debitum negligentiae, must produce the same effect which the perfect obedience of the sinner would have produced had it been rendered, and must therefore wholly supersede the necessity of Christ's passive obedience. So, according to law, the exemption of the sinner from the penalty of law is secured by the absence or want of disobedience, which also would have secured his reward. The passive obedience of Christ then, in gratuitous justification, answering the end of the absence or want of disobedience, or paying the debitum poenae, must secure the reward, and must therefore wholly supersede the necessity of Christ's active obedience. Thus, instead of a different, distinct single effect peculiar to each cause, each cause produces both effects, or a twofold effect which is the same in both cases. The entire requisite effect being necessarily produced by either cause, the necessity of the other cause is entirely superseded. If we suppose either, not the shadow of a reason so far as the principles of law are concerned, can be given for supposing the other. The inference then from the nature and principles of law is undeniable, that if the subject of law is not obedient to law he is disobedient, and if he is not disobedient he is obedient. Thus all men, in their practical conceptions of the subject, conceive of the relations to law in every subject of law. None of the principles of human intercourse are better or more assuredly understood than those which result from law. The entire influence of law in human society, and all that is comprised in the administration of justice or of government among men, must wholly cease, if men did not regard a legal requirement as a prohibition of its opposite, and a legal prohibition as a requirement of its opposite, on the part of the subject of law. Such being the universal conception of men, such and such only is the universal import of the word law, as used in the word of God in its present application. To say otherwise, is to say that the word is not used in the Scriptures *de usu loquendi*, which is to say that the word has no meaning, and that so far as this important word is concerned, the Scriptures are not a revelation.

It may confirm the truth, briefly to refer to the probable source of the error on the subject under consideration. This seems to be the use of negative

forms of language in certain cases in which they answer all the purposes of speech, as well, to say the least, as the use of positive forms. Language often derives peculiar force from expressing more than it says. When our Saviour said to the Jews, "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you," instead of implying even the possible absence of the opposite principle, his language in import was a direct and impressive charge of the existence of that principle. Because that it can be said of a stone that it is not either foolish or wise, can it be said of a man that he is not wise, without saying in import he is foolish; or of a subject of law, that he is not obedient without saying he is disobedient, or that he is not disobedient without saying that he is obedient?

But I appeal to the language of Christ, which is still more explicit: "No man," saith he, "can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other." How could the truth be more plainly or convincingly taught respecting man, than that if he hates or does not love one of the two great objects of moral affection, he does love the other? And again, he saith, "He that is not for me is against me." Who then shall say, that in man's relation to God's law there is any middle ground, which he can occupy between obedience and disobedience; or that not being for God is not necessarily identical with being against him? -- that the want of obedience to law in the subject of law is not disobedience to law?

But we have instruction on this topic, which, it would seem, must terminate all debate. The case of the unprofitable servant (Matt. xxv. 30) is one not of disobedience as distinguished from obedience, but of the want of obedience. For this, he is not merely deprived of a reward, but is doomed to outer darkness, in weeping and gnashing of teeth. How can it then be said that punishment comes for disobedience and not for the want of obedience?

Thus the principle of law, that in requiring obedience law prohibits disobedience, and in prohibiting disobedience it requires obedience, is not a merely speculative and harmless principle, but one which common

sense determines to be involved in the essential nature of law, and which our Lord deemed of sufficient practical moment formally to inculcate. Why then has this principle of law been denied to such an extent by theologians? Is it not plainly invented for the purpose of carrying a point, in their sectarian scheme of theology respecting the influence of what they call the active and the passive obedience of Christ in our justification? Whether they can maintain their views of the subject on other grounds than the principle of law on which they claim to rest it, is not now the question. Whether they can or cannot, these views can derive no support from this or any other principle of law. What would be the relation of a subject of law with its claim on him for ceaseless obedience if he can be viewed as without obedience and yet not disobedient, or as without disobedience and yet not obedient?

I have dwelt the longer on this principle of law, because the error in respect to it has been made, as it seems to me, the most plausible basis of a far more serious error respecting the active and passive obedience of Christ in our justification -- an error which excludes the great sacrifice of the Son of God from its Scriptural and august relation to law, as exclusively sustaining its authority in our justification.

LECTURE X: THE NATURE OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT AS REVEALED.

Section 4: The law in the sum of its requirements. -- The sum of requirements stated. -- Measured by human and not angelic capacities. -- The law requires supreme love and honor to the extent of man's power. -- This love comprehends those great duties that are always binding, and every other duty whenever it is binding. -- Mistake of divines in considering "the two commandments of the law" as equal. -- Love to God. -- Love of benevolence and not love of complacency. -- Relation of one to the other. -- This love is an elective preference, and supreme. -- The law of God is perfect; it is holy, just, and good. -- This view important to elevate the standard of Christian piety. -- Ought to be enforced by the Christian ministry to stimulate to holiness, and to expose the defects of a godless philanthropy.

I now proceed, as I proposed, to consider the law. Sect. 4 -- In the sum of its requirements.

By the sum of the requirements of the divine law I mean that one comprehensive requirement which, in its true nature and tendency, so involves or includes all others, as when obeyed to secure obedience to all others.

I shall now attempt to show that the sum of the requirements of the law of God is, that man love God in the highest degree, in which he is capable of loving him; or in more simple phrase, that he love God as much as he can love him.

Such is the obvious and undeniable import of what our Saviour calls "The first and great commandment of the law," which is so often repeated in the Old Testament and so fully ratified in the New; viz., "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." No form of language, according to Hebrew idiom, stronger than that which is here employed, can be supposed, for the purpose of expressing man's duty to love God to the extent of his power to love him. To understand the language therefore in any other meaning, is not only gratuitous, but is forbidden by the very terms employed.

The language is also so peculiar, compared with any used to describe love toward any other object than God; it is so manifestly intensive in form and exhaustive in specification, that we at once admit its propriety and truth, and feel the irreverence of applying it to any other object.

We shall, I think, be still more convinced that such is the import of this

rule of action by further explanation and reflection.

Man's capacity to love God is comparatively limited. He is not an angel, and with his inferior powers he cannot love God as angels do. His feeble intellect with its necessary feeble apprehension and limited comprehension of God, involves a corresponding weakness of heart and will, so that were he to love God with all his power to love him, his love would not burn and glow with the intensity of a seraph's fervor. This fact should guard the mind against all enthusiastic notions on the very subject, in respect to which they have been allowed and cherished. And further, man's power of loving may be viewed, so to speak, as a given quantity -- so much in degree, more or less -- in relation to all the objects which he is qualified in his nature to love.

Moreover, he has not only power to love other objects than God, but is under an absolute necessity of loving many other objects. These are fit objects of a degree of affection or love, and man cannot suppress and extinguish all affection in his heart for each and all of them. If he could, and were actually so to do, he could not exercise gratitude to God -- he could not sing the song of heaven -- for gratitude involves not merely love to a benefactor, but also the love of his gifts. Now if man should love all other objects of affection in as low a degree as he can, or in no higher degree than they are fitted to be loved, the residue of his power of affection would remain to be exercised in loving God; and should he actually and perfectly exercise this power in loving God, he would love God as much as he can love him, i.e., "with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength." He would thus perfectly fulfill the FIRST and GREAT commandment. This perfect love to God is indeed supreme love; but it is also more than supreme love, for man may love God supremely, and yet not love him to the extent of his power. Some however, suppose that the sum of the divine requirement is supreme love to God, and nothing more. Indeed, theology is almost silent in respect to any thing more, even as man's duty; as if a creature formed in God's image had no power to place God in his affections, in but a slight degree above the things which are seen and temporal. But can this be true? Can it be true that God has given only powers so diminutive to the creature whom he has made for eternal companionship with himself? Or has man powers of affection, which in the perfect use of them, qualify him

to become an associate with angels and archangels, and can any reason be given why man should not love God more than supremely, even to the extent of his powers? or any reason why he does not in fact thus love God, except that he loves something else unduly -- more than it is fit to be loved in view of its relative worth? Nor can man love God less than with all his power to love him, and at the same time love him as it is fit that he should love him. But perfect fitness in the degree of affection toward any object, according to the true worth of the object, is essential to, or rather is the perfect rightness of the affection, whether natural or moral. Of course there can be no perfect rightness either natural or moral in any affection on the part of man toward God, in which man does not love God to the extent of his power. This element therefore, whatever be necessary to the moral rightness of this affection, is essential to its perfect rightness or rectitude in any sense, and of course to its perfect moral rightness or rectitude. Besides, why ought God to be loved by us with merely supreme love, and not to be loved to the extent of our power to love him? Of what love less than this can a Being of so much greatness, and goodness, and capacity of blessedness, be thought worthy? If in the whole range of existence there is one such being as we call God, then in the infinitude of his attributes, and in his capacity of blessedness, how far must he excel any and every necessarily limited system of creation! If we suppose such a system to be enlarged, and its perfection and happiness -- all that can render it beautiful and lovely -- to be increased to any extent it so would the blessedness of God as rejoicing in his own work also increase, in the peculiar and higher blessedness of giving instead of receiving. In view of the future, God can never be said to have already made the fullest conceivable expression of himself in the happiness of his own creation, nor to have secured to himself the highest conceivable degree of blessedness. Creation, however vast to our apprehension, is and ever must be insignificant compared with the Creator, save only that it reveals a greatness in him unexpressed in the past, and which never can be expressed in a coming eternity.

If God is a part of the actual universe, then is he inconceivably greater in excellence than all beside. In comparison with him, any created system were as nothing. To deny man's obligation to love with all his power such

a being as God, is to deny his obligation to love in the degree proportioned to the work of the object; and if this obligation to love God does not exist, none exists. But better, far better surely were the non-existence or the misery of God's creation, than the non-existence or misery of God himself. Yet either the non-existence or misery of God is the necessary result of a warrant for practical enmity on the part of his moral creation, or, which is the same thing, of denying their obligation to love him to the extent of their power. If God then, in that perfect rule given in the FIRST and GREAT commandment of his Revelation, holds men to the full measure of their obligation as moral beings, then he requires them to love him to the extent of their power.

This affection is, as I maintain, the sum of God's requirements of men as their perfect moral governor. It is so in the first place, as it is the whole of that to which, in all circumstances of man's existence, alone pertains perfect moral rectitude. Other action as distinguished from this and not included in it, may, according to variable circumstances, be right, or may be wrong, but can never be morally right. But I have already said enough on the important distinction between morally right action and action merely right, to show my own views of it, and also how confused and erroneous the views of many moralists and theologians.

In the second Place, the affection of which we speak is the sum of God's requirements as it fully meets and satisfies every claim of God on man. He who should love God to the extent of his power always and in all circumstances, cannot be conceived to be morally delinquent in any respect or degree whatever. If circumstances exist which dictate and demand acts of love and beneficence to his kindred or to other fellow-beings, or if circumstances demand the contrary (Luke, xiv. 26), he will be sure, under the controlling influence of this principle, to conform his subordinate acts to the demand of circumstances, and thus, in such action, to act right. But he thereby adds nothing to his own moral rectitude, except the manifestation of it, and of course nothing which is necessary to satisfy God's claim on him as a moral being. What God requires of men as moral beings is not subordinate, executive action, but that morally right affection, and thus he secures the performance of all

right subordinate action in all the varying circumstances of their existence. Such love to God is the sum of all God's requirements, as it comprises in its very nature as a principium or principle all right subordinate action, as the good tree comprises the good fruit which it produces, or the good treasure of the heart the good things which the good man bringeth forth from it.

There is however, another sense in which theologians seem often to speak of what they call the sum of God's requirements. They appear to be misled, by misapprehending what the Saviour means when he says, "On these two commandments hang all the (Jewish) law and the prophets." The meaning of the Saviour is plain, viz., that all the instruction given by Moses and the prophets, for the regulation of human conduct, depends on and is determined by these two commandments. But this is not saying that the FIRST and GREAT commandment is not the comprehensive requirement of God's moral government. On the contrary, as we have shown in our previous explication of the Saviour's language, he clearly teaches that the second commandment, like all other requirements which respect subordinate acts or duties, is comprised in the first. Nor, as we have seen, is it possible in any sense of the language, that any man should love his neighbor as himself, unless his love of himself be first duly regulated by his obedience to the first. By obeying -- and only by obeying the first, does or can his love of himself cease to be inordinate, and thus to be inconsistent with perfect love to God, and thus by its due regulation become the measure of love to his neighbor. Besides, a man's love to his neighbor, his fellow-creature, even to his kindred, may be inordinate, or rather will be inordinate, unless he first obeys the first commandment, in loving God to the extent of his power. The sum then of God's requirements of man as a subject of his moral government, in the only proper meaning of the language, is that he love God to the extent of his power. Such is the only supposable meaning of the FIRST and GREAT commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

This view of the sum of God's requirement of man may be confirmed by

briefly considering some other essential characteristics of the state of mind required. I remark, then --

That the love to God required in the divine law, is primarily the love of benevolence. Some theologians suppose the primary and only form of this affection to be the love of complacency, or the love of God's perfect moral character. This however, in view of the only just distinction between these two kinds of affection, cannot be true. The love of benevolence is the love of the well-being, or of the highest happiness of the sentient universe. As God comprises in himself immeasurably "the greatest portion of being," and of course compared with the universe besides the greatest capacity of blessedness, his perfect happiness has more worth than any which can be conceived to come into competition with it. He therefore, who loves God as his law requires, must love God's highest blessedness, which depends on and results from his own perfect character, i.e., his own disposition to produce the highest happiness which he can produce. Now he who loves God's highest blessedness will also love God's perfect character. This love of his perfect character is the love of complacency. It is loving God's perfect character on account of its intrinsic loveliness and excellence. But the intrinsic loveliness and excellence of his perfect character consists in its nature and tendency to produce the highest happiness which is possible to God in the nature of things. The mind of man, without primarily loving the highest possible happiness, and of course without loving God's highest happiness, cannot love God's character on account of its intrinsic loveliness and excellence. The mind cannot love the means of an end as such without primarily loving the end of which it is the means. If then the mind does not primarily love the highest blessedness of God and his perfect character as the means of this end, and this on account of its perfect fitness or adaptation as the means of producing this end, it does not love his character on account of its intrinsic loveliness or excellence -- does not love it at all. In other words, unless the mind primarily loves God with the love of benevolence, it cannot love God with the love of complacency. I do not in this use of language mean to say that in the order of time one of these affections is prior to the other; but I intend to express simply the idea of priority in the order of nature, or the dependence of one on the other. I do not suppose, nor would I imply, that the two affections ever exist

separately in the mind in such a manner that the love of benevolence can exist without the contemporaneous existence of the love of complacency. Though separable by a mental analysis which shows a dependence of one on the other, as in many other cases, they are Justly viewed as co-existing in one complex state of the mind, properly called the love of God.

Again: the love required in the divine law or God's perfect rule of action, is an elective preference of God. President Edwards has often said that "the affections are only the stronger and more vigorous actings of the will." And yet it would be easy to show that he often distinguishes them, not only in the Inquiry on the Will, but in his other writings. In his Dissertation on Virtue, he says: "True virtue most essentially consists in benevolence to Being in general. Or, it is that consent, propensity, and union of heart to Being in general, that is immediately exercised in general goodwill." I cite this passage from Edwards to show that its meaning is the same as that which I have so often used on the same subject when speaking of the nature of virtue, and substantially that which, theologically speaking, I express, when I say the love of God is an elective preference of God. I adopt this language because it describes love to God as both an affection and a choice -- as an act of the will and heart.

As I have elsewhere shown more at length, every act of will not only implies the prior existence of affections toward at least two objects, but the present existence of such affections; for the mind in every act of will, electively gives these existing affections supremely to one of these objects rather than to the other. It is equally true, that affections can in no form of love, desire or propensity, become practical, or prompt or move the mind to subsequent action in respect to one object rather than another, without an act of the will, or the elective act by which the affections are placed supremely on one object rather than on the other. I need not say that love to God as required in the great commandment, is eminently a practical affection, the moral principle, principium, the beginning and source of all other right action. Thus viewed it involves therefore an act of the will -- the elective act, which places one object above another in the affections. It is an elective preference of God to

every other object of affection. Hence as I have before shown, it is in the Scriptures spoken of as an act of choice as well as an act of affection, when the object of the writer or speaker requires him to give prominence to the elective element of the complex act. (Josh. xxiv. 15; Isaiah, vii. 15; Luke, x. 42.)

Again: true love to God must, for another reason, be at least supreme love. God is so far beyond and above not only our fellow-creatures, but any conceivable universe of creatures in all that is worthy of our love, that if he ought to be loved at all, he ought to be loved more than any conceivable system of creatures. This is only saying, that God compared with all things besides, ought to be supremely loved, because according to the eternal truth and fitness of things, our affections ought in all cases to be in proportion to the intrinsic worth and loveliness of their objects. To deny this, is to deny the intuitive proposition that it is fit that we should love every object as it is fit to be loved by us; which is to deny that it is fit that we should love the object as it is fit that we should love it. Whether God ought to be loved more than supremely is not now the question. It is, whether he ought to be loved at least supremely? And how plain is it, that any lower degree of affection for him would be a palpable violence to truth and a practical outrage on nature; a practical outrage on our own nature as well as on that of God, and would tend directly to the complete ruin and wretchedness of all. Without at least supreme love to God there can be no degree of that practical affection for him which is his due -- no executive doings prompted by such a principle fulfilling his will in the production of actual results -- no glorifying God by offerings of praise -- no walking worthy of God unto all well-pleasing -- no rejoicing on the part of God himself in all his works, even in his moral creation made to reflect his own moral image forever -- no condition of his pardoning mercy to a sinful world; for every other condition -- any act not involving this -- would defeat the grand end of his benevolence in providing pardon for the guilty. Without this affection every practical principle of the human heart would be hostility -- enmity to God, to his designs, to his highest blessedness and that of his sentient creation -- the utter defeat of infinite benevolence in complete and universal misery.

And further: if love to God is not an elective preference, i.e., if it does not involve an act of will, then it can possess no moral quality. If it is not such an act, it must be merely a necessary constitutional affection; and can no more possess moral quality than the circulation of the blood or the beating of the heart. Thus destitute of moral quality, it cannot as a moral act be the subject of requirement or approbation by a moral governor, nor yet be dictated or approved by the conscience of the subject. To be a moral act and of course to be a morally right act, it must be a free act -- an act exempt from all necessity -- an act done in the exercise of moral liberty. No act of the mind which with the knowledge of the difference between the excellence and worth of God and of all other objects, does not by an act of the will fix the affections in a higher degree on God than on any and every other object, can be the subject of legal requirement by the Supreme Lawgiver, or enthrone him in this high position. If then God in his law requires any affection for himself on the part of men, he requires at least supreme love as an elective preference.

In view of what has been said, it is manifest that supreme love to God, if it falls below loving him to the extent of the powers, is not all that he claims of men in his perfect law. Any and every degree of affection for God as a substitute for this or compared with this, is a low, weak, and unworthy principle of action. God may and doubtless does require of men under the provision of a perfect atonement for sin, a lower degree of supreme love than he requires in his perfect law. But he does not require the former as that which in any respect meets and satisfies the claim of his perfect law. In its relation to this claim it falls utterly short of it, and must be viewed as the transgression of law, and as such justly exposing the subject to its full penalty. Under the relation of satisfying the claim of his perfect law, or as in any sense obedience to this law, God neither requires nor accepts that low degree of supreme love which is the condition of his pardoning mercy. It were entirely consistent with his justice or with his authority as lawgiver, to pardon sin under a perfect atonement without the required condition. Such an atonement would fully sustain his authority, without the imperfect love or faith or repentance of the sinner. The reason for the requirement of these as the condition of pardon is not as some maintain, that they are necessary to sustain his authority in granting pardon to the sinner for the same reason as is the

atonement. It is widely different. It is not to uphold his authority, or vindicate his justice as a lawgiver in the slightest degree. This is fully and perfectly accomplished by a perfect atonement. The reason for making faith and repentance -- imperfect but supreme -- the conditions of pardon, is derived exclusively from his benevolence as distinguished from his justice. It is, that having by the atonement removed every obstacle from his justice, he may gratify his benevolence in raising up from this world of sinful beings a holy and happy kingdom. He makes personal holiness, in some low degree, the condition of his acceptance of sinners, that in this way by the discipline of his grace he may perfect the imperfect principle, and so prepare them for that world in which this kingdom itself will be perfected, and into which nothing that defileth shall enter.

Thus God requires far more in his perfect law than he exacts as the condition of his pardoning mercy. These requirements, made for different reasons, harmonize with each other, with every attribute of God, and with every principle of his perfect moral government. Thus law is established, and in every element of its influence. Alike therefore under his system of grace as under a system of mere law, he enforces in all the majesty of his rightful authority, his immutable and eternal claim that men love him to the extent of their power.

REMARKS.

1. How perfect is the law of God's moral government!

According to the view which has now been given of it, man is bound by the full authority of God to absolute moral perfection in all his doings. Thus appears the force of the apostle's commendation of the commandment, that it is holy, just, and good. It is "holy." Such a claim of law utterly excludes all sin or moral defilement. As requiring a positive and exactly defined act of the subject, it meets every want or deficiency

with the frown of God's prohibition. The claim, in its full form and absolute purity, must be met by the subject. In this respect it bespeaks the purity, the holiness of its author, who cannot look on sin, and casts his withering abhorrence upon the slightest moral defilement! It is "holy," for it requires holiness -- holiness in its celestial beauty -- that resplendent moral purity which gives to heaven its glories as "the habitation of God's holiness, and awakens the song that makes all its pillars tremble; "holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty." It is also "just." The love to such a being as God by man to the extent of his power, is but the homage due. The right to require it is based in his infinite perfection, eternally and immutably possessed in his own Godhead. Who shall be found to question the rightful authority of such a being as God, his absolute prerogative to reign, the justice Of his legal requirement, or the equity of his administration? The love which he claims on the part of men is the only true and full recognition by them of God's greatness and worthiness compared with any thing in a universe besides. It is this love which alone attests, exalts, and honors the supremacy of God. It is this love which alone by its reverence, its adoration, its submission, its confidence, its universal obedience, gives the throne to Him to whom only it belongs, and thus, recognizing the rightful authority of Him that sitteth thereon, imparts protection and safety to every interest of his kingdom. What less according to the principles of eternal justice, can be done by man than to obey this law of love; what less can be claimed by the sovereign and guardian of such an empire? The commandment which is so "holy" and so "just," is also "good." If God has created all things for his pleasure; if he will rejoice in all his works; if he is blessed forever -- how is his creature man to contribute to his blessedness except by doing his will, by walking worthy of God unto all pleasing? How is God as a perfect moral governor to be pleased, to be perfectly blessed, except by the obedience and the homage which he requires in his law? The ultimate end of God, in creation and providence is his own highest blessedness. This end is necessarily and emphatically the ultimate end of his moral government; for, as we have seen, all his other works both of creation and of providence are subordinate to his moral government and to its great end. His law is of course perfectly adapted to this end. What higher, better end -- what end worthier of himself -- what other ultimate end than this can God propose? What law so perfect as that which is perfectly fitted to accomplish this end? It is the necessary and perfect means of God's highest blessedness. How excellent -- how absolutely good is such a rule

of moral action! But this is not all its excellence. It is based in the everlasting truth -- the grand, cardinal fact of the nature of things -- the absolute coincidence of God's highest glory and blessedness with man's highest well-being. Thus while it aims, at and uncounteracted, would secure the former, it is not less adapted to secure man's perfection in character and in happiness. As an intelligent preference of God involving the knowledge of the difference between God and every other object of affection -- how must it give the mind the calm dignity of repose in truth -- the gladness and the joy of walking in the light of life! How as the governing principle of the mind it secures the end of his being, giving to all subordinate affections their beautiful harmony and to all executive doings their most productive energy! How like the whole armor of God it resists temptation and the tempter. How as the most vigorous health and life of the soul it tends to its own perpetuity and ever -- augmenting strength! How it evinces in the mind's own consciousness, the peace and triumph of its own reality and excellence! How it ventures into fellowship with God assured of his love in return! How it delights in doing his will, and in the unfolding and fulfillment of his designs! How it finds its own blessedness in God's! How it adorns the soul with all the beauties of holiness! How it enters, sure of their joyful welcome, into companionship with angels and archangels! How it lives and acts and rejoices under the light of God's countenance -- the ceaseless smile of his love! In a word, how it imparts to man God's own likeness in character and in blessedness, while according to its own measure it engages in the service, augments the bliss, and partakes of the glories of heaven! Can such love to God dwell in the heart of man! What else is great; what else is good; what else is godlike; what else is to be thought of but the God whom he loves?

2. This view of the divine law is important, not to say necessary, to elevate the standard of Christian character. It will be generally admitted, that the character of good men in this world is marred by great moral imperfections; vide John, xv. 2; Rom. vii.; Gal. v. 17. Would not such imperfections be greatly diminished by juster -- more adequate views of God's perfect law as the authoritative rule of moral action? It is true, that no child of God may ever attain that perfect love of God which his law so justly demands, till the last hour of probation -- even till the moment in

which the soul begins to leave the body -- a process perhaps, of separation more gradual than is commonly supposed, and which may involve a mental consciousness before unknown. Then, in a momentary but unclouded vision of faith, the soul, aware of its departure, may let go of the world with all its undue affection, and fix its love on God as he is. Until then however, we are constrained to believe that love to God in the heart of good men is at most only a low degree of supreme love. Herein consists the imperfection of the saints -- their remaining sin as we call it which is so common and so much to be lamented. Nor must we disparage the principle in any of its relations and aspects. Such love to God as supreme is also sincere, and through abundant grace, secures God's forgiveness and favor. But it is not that perfect love which God with the full weight of his infinite authority, in his law demands of all men. Still, as supreme love to God, it is vastly diverse from the supreme love of the world. It has a useful tendency and influence, while the supreme love of the world in every substantial respect is wholly destructive. The one is destined by use and discipline to attain perfection: the other by its own inherent corruption, to grow worse and worse. The one being imperfect, according to the law of works, is sin, while in relation to the law of faith it is obedience: the other is sin without qualification, or in all its forms and relations. The one, through an atonement, renders pardon and acceptance with God not only consistent with justice, but with every other interest of benevolence: the other subjects to condemnation and punishment without hope, not only as consistent with but as demanded by justice, and by every other interest of benevolence. The one causes sorrow and contrition, more or less, over its own imperfection, and many a struggle and sacrifice, that it may triumph over a tempting and corrupting world: the other acquiesces in its own deformity without sorrow and without conflict, and defies and resists external assault. The one desires most of all, higher measures of personal holiness: the other is indifferent, or rather decidedly averse to any such acquisition. The one through grace issues in eternal life: the other as the demand of inflexible justice in eternal death. And yet with this vast and ever-increasing difference between the two great practical principles of the righteous and the wicked -- with all the worth and excellence of the former when contrasted with the unqualified moral deformity of the latter -- still how imperfect, how sinfully imperfect according to God's perfect law, is all that can be called, in this world, Christian principle! It is, as I said, supreme love to God; but how low in degree! How is it chilled, and checked, and

weakened, by unduly and sinfully holding the affections of the heart to the world! These affections still linger and play about the former idol of the heart with so much activity and vigor, that the Christian's love to God scarcely acquires the vitality and power which determine its distinctive reality. For the most part, it is but a feeble, fitful, and often an entirely inactive principle, wanting the strength and controlling influence necessary to own distinct visibility to the mind, while its existence is more than doubtful both to its subject and to others. In many sad instances as in those of David and Peter, it betrays its weakness or rather its suspended activity, in overt crimes, as it would in thousands besides under like temptations. Thus one of the only two objects of moral affection to man -- a vanity as it is -- is loved more than it is fit to be loved: the other, though the all-perfect God, is scarcely loved more than this vanity! Oh, has man no more power of affection for the living God! What a stunted, dwarfish affection, in view of so much greatness and excellence! How unworthy, how inexcusable, I had almost said, how vile, were such love to God as this! What cause for humiliation for shame and confusion of face! How it needs to be washed with the tears of repentance, and these very tears themselves need to be purified with atoning blood!

Now I do not say that perfect love to God has ever been or ever will be attained by the Christian, until the last hour or even moment of his probation on earth. Nor yet do I find, as some think they find, a scriptural warrant for saying that he will not attain to such perfect love, and still less that he cannot. But I do say that he can -- that he ought; and that he has no excuse or palliation for the imperfection of his love to God. God's authority is upon him. He cannot throw it off, nor weaken it. He must fulfill or violate the obligation it imposes. The concern of the Christian is not merely to comply with the condition of God's forgiveness, and to be satisfied merely to escape damnation. He must hereafter awake in God's perfect likeness. The work must be achieved before his probation in the strict sense terminates. And sloth and worldliness through life give no security that it will be achieved when the final summons comes. He is called to perfect holiness in the fear of God. The same unbending authority which requires him to set his affections on things above, requires him not to set them on things below. He must lay aside every

weight. He must press toward the mark for the prize of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He who would give the arrow its highest elevation must aim at the sun. So the Christian, in the exercise of holy affection, must aim to give it perfection in view of its object -- God, as he is. In every act of worship -- in every act of faith, repentance, prayer, he should love and therefore aim to love God to the extent of his power. If he has never done it in the past, the more reason for doing it in the present.

Finally I remark, how important it is that just views of the perfect law of God be entertained and inculcated by the Christian ministry. How else shall they become co-workers with Christ in calling not the righteous, but sinners to repentance? How commend the great Physician to any except the sick? How fall in with the mission and work of the Holy Spirit in convincing the world of sin? How show that sin, by the commandment, is exceeding sinful? How render Christ precious to every believer? How magnify the superabounding grace of God? How enforce daily, hourly repentance? How prepare the children of God for a triumphant or even a peaceful death? How present every man perfect in Christ Jesus at the judgment-seat?

There are yet other considerations on this part of the subject which are not to be unthought of. What exceedingly low and superficial views of the full claim of God on the men who are to live and to act under his moral government forever, are entertained by large portions of the Protestant Church, and even by professed Christian divines and moralists! To what an extent is the law of God depressed and obscured! How, as the consequence, are the sinful imperfections and shortcomings of good men, every one of which according to God's law deserves God's condemnation, unseen in their true moral turpitude and unrepented of for their defilement and guilt! How common to infer that because God's perfect law is not a rule of judgment, therefore it has lost all its authority, ceased to be a rule of action and become unworthy of a thought! Or to conceive of supreme love to God, and a low degree of it, as if it were all the love that God's law requires, and to regard mere compliance with the conditions of his pardoning mercy, as that absolute moral perfection which fits the soul for heaven's purity, services, and joys! How great is the

error! And yet who of the best religious teachers, so exhibits that use or exercise of all the powers and capacities of the immortal spirit within us -- call them by what names you will -- intellect, heart, affections, susceptibility, will, conscience -- which is requisite to give to the love of God that absolute perfection, without which there is guilt on the soul! Or if the law is quoted -- which is better than nothing -- how constantly is it assumed that it is understood without explanation! How is explanatory instruction almost exclusively confined to repentance, to faith, to regeneration, and other conditions of salvation through grace, or to some slight and imperceptible progress in religion, as if man's absolute moral perfection were no concern of his in this life, but the responsibility and the work of preparation for heaven were to be thrown upon God at the moment of the soul's departure from the body, or in some short purgatory during its flight to a better world! Worse than all and in confirmation of all this, how is the full measure of man's moral obligation obscured, shaded away into practical oblivion, or rather unequivocally denied by the perpetual asseveration of his utter inability to love God as God's law requires, i.e., his inability to love God with all his ability! What sad views of truth are these for beings whose preparation for heaven must be not only begun, but completed during this short probation on earth! What a complete paralysis is thus imparted to the Christian life on earth, in which, if Christ and his apostles are to be regarded, all, all is action, energy -- life in all its fullness of activity and strenuousness of effort -- the labor for sustenance, the wakefulness of the watcher, the energizing for the strait gate, the exertion of the race, the vigor of the wrestler, the resistance and onset of battle! And yet the pulpit and the press, theology, preaching, prayer, all join the chant of the sluggard heart -- you cannot, you cannot; i.e., you cannot love God as much as you can!

And then again, what multitudes of ungodly men extol, commend, and hold in exclusive esteem, love or kindness to our fellow-men! The good man in the world's estimation, is the man who loves his neighbor, his fellow-men, though he make little or even no account of God. According to this standard of morality and religion, the man who practices a generous liberality or philanthropic beneficence, reciprocates kindness with kindness, and is blameless in the intercourse of business and of social life, fulfills every moral obligation. He may live and die as

thousands do, without supreme love to God, and even without one respectful or affectionate thought of God beyond what is necessarily associated with not denying his existence, and still love God as much as he ought. It is enough so far as God is concerned, that man is not a contemptuous atheist. Thus mere philanthropy without supreme love to God -- humanity, going forth, uncounteracted, in its instinctive emotions, kindness to man without godliness or rather with utter ungodliness of heart, is true virtue, true religion. Thus God in all his greatness and his worthiness to be loved, is not to be supremely loved, but our fellow-men; so that if God's will, interests, or designs in any respect come into competition with those of our fellow-men or our own, the former will be as they constantly are, sacrificed to the latter. But as we have said, if the least degree of love is due to God, then at the least it is supreme love. For why should beings of far inferior worth and therefore of far inferior fitness to be loved, be loved at all, and yet a being of infinitely superior fitness to be loved, not be loved in a far superior degree? Has man no capacity or power to love in degree any object beyond that degree of love which is due to a fellow-worm, or even to this atom world? Has God destined so insignificant a creature to immortality? Plainly, if there is a God and if there is a man, then either God must be loved at least supremely, or he cannot be loved at all, as it is fit that he should be loved. What then Shall we say of mere philanthropy as virtue -- the merely loving man without, loving God? Instead of any due recognition of God, it wholly excludes him as an object of affection from the human heart, for it is the love of the creature more than of the Creator. It exiles God utterly from a world of his own, a world of creatures made in his own likeness -- made for high fellowship -- high social intercourse with himself. It is practical atheism, for it is a practical denial of every important relation between God and man. It practically denies all the rights of God as the benevolent Father of man's existence, and all the obligations of man reciprocal to these rights. It thus denies the supreme and rightful sovereignty of God's moral dominion over men, and of course the reciprocal spirit of loyalty, with its supreme love, its reverence, its submission, its unqualified devotion in doing all his will. It thus denies God as the constant and bountiful benefactor of his creatures, their all-providing God, for it neither acknowledges with gratitude and praise their dependence on him for blessings in the past, nor for blessings in the future, by prayer and supplication. In the relations of Redeemer and Sanctifier in which God comes closest to sinful man, grasping as it were

the very heart with his love, they know him not in the least return of grateful affection, nor in the peaceful repose furnished for human guilt by trusting in his mercy. They know him not in the condescension which brings him from his high sanctuary where he inhabiteth eternity, to dwell with the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite. They know nothing of his invitations and promises, as alluring to heaven, inspiring its steadfast hope, and securing its immortal joys; and nothing of his warnings and threatened terrors in their kind and salutary design to secure safety from impending ruin. They know nothing of the probation he assigns them as a place of preparation for his presence -- for that theater of existence, of life and action amid the scenes, the grandeurs, and the glories of eternity. They know nothing of him as the final judge, the supreme and resistless arbiter of all destiny, in the exaltation, purity, and joys of perfect holiness, or in the ever-deepening turpitude and miseries of sin. They are WITHOUT GOD and WITHOUT HOPE.

What is the remedy? The first remedy is that the commandment should come, and come in the fullness of its claim and its rightful authority -- come to the conscience and to the heart of every subject of the Lord God Almighty. And how is this to be accomplished, except through the instrumentality of the Christian ministry? And if they will not awake to the summons and rouse themselves to the work of their high calling; if they will not comprehend and unfold God's commandment in its exceeding breadth; if they will not hold up the torch of God's law -- to the sin-darkened mind, to what purpose can they, hope to proclaim the salvation of the Gospel? They will neither save themselves nor them that hear them.

LECTURE XI: THE NATURE OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT AS REVEALED.

Section 5: The law in the import of its sanctions -- The reward. -- Proposition stated. -- Eternal life not the sanction of the law of Moses. -- The reward not directly revealed -- Not frequently repeated. -- Made known by inference find representation. -- Does this involve double sense -- The proper and accidental sense of words distinguished. -- Both

authorized by usage. -- Allegorical and fantastic interpretations deprecated. -- Twofold sense abundant in the Scriptures. -- Examples in parables: Gen. iii. 15; xvii. S. -- Application to reward promised in the Mosaic law. -- Use of the word life in the Old and New Testament. -- The law of Eden.

I COME NOW, as proposed, to Sect. 5, the law in the import of its sanctions; and first, of the reward.

Concerning this, I state the proposition now to be proved, thus:

The reward promised by the law of Gods moral government to the obedient subject is complete or perfect happiness so long as he continues obedient.

For the reasons already assigned, I shall first inquire what evidence is furnished by the Mosaic law.

To prevent misapprehension, I would here say, that although I suppose a future state was revealed under the Mosaic dispensation, I do not suppose that eternal life -- meaning by it confirmation in holiness and happiness in a future world on condition of perfect obedience in this -- was the sanction of the law of God's moral government as revealed through this dispensation. Such a promise may have been received, but according to principles already stated, I Suppose it to be the same promise of eternal life to personal holiness, which the Gospel more fully reveals. But the reward of the law as such, exclusive of a gracious economy, was simply a reward promised during the continued obedience of the subject. Nothing more and nothing less could be inferred.

Again, I need only to advert to the fact which has been so fully explained,

that the moral government of God, administered over Israel, is to be carefully distinguished from the theocracy which was also administered over that people. The perfect moral government of God over men as immortal beings, in respect to any formal development of its great principles, was but imperfectly exhibited directly by the Jewish lawgiver. The theocracy or civil institute was very fully and minutely unfolded. I am not saying how much this people knew, or had the means of knowing respecting God's moral government, from earlier revelations; but that it was not the primary or leading object of the mission of Moses formally and directly to unfold the nature and principles of this government. This object was aimed at indirectly and through the medium of the theocracy or civil government, and was, in fact accomplished as has already been explained.

Further: we are not to look for those frequent and formal recognitions and statements of the truth now under consideration which we might expect to find in the actual administration of a perfect moral government under a merely legal dispensation. The perfect moral government of God which is here distinguished from the theocracy or civil government which God administered over Israel, was administered under an economy of grace as revealed in the covenant with Abraham, which the law -- the civil institute that was four hundred and thirty years after -- could not disannul. We shall look in vain therefore, for any instance of a legal reward under God's moral government according to the principles of such a government. There was no perfectly obedient subject to be thus rewarded. Nor, viewing the Mosaic code as a mere national institution, can we rationally expect the direct, literal declaration of our doctrine. The promise in that broad and comprehensive import which includes perfect happiness, does not pertain to such an institution. All that we are to look for under this institution in formal and literal statement is, the promise of a long, prosperous, and happy life to obedient subjects. There is yet another reason why we are not to look for any explicit, literal, formal declaration or development of this great principle of a moral government in the Mosaic economy. The earlier revelations of God were comparatively obscure, and the light which was to be shed on this world was, in the wisdom of God, to be progressive. In accordance with this fact, the Jewish theocracy in the Scriptures, which is often called by way

of eminence, THE LAW, was "a shadow of good things to come" -- a covenant or institution not faultless (not perfect), and therefore to give place to another and a better covenant founded on better promises -- it was an example and shadow of heavenly things. (Heb. viii. 5-8; x. 1; Gal. iii. 17, &c.)

How then would the Jew reason in respect to the rewards of that perfect moral government which was represented by the theocracy? Could he derive but one inference, and would not that be the inference which is expressed in our proposition? Were there any facts to bring doubt or uncertainty over this inference. Not the fact that God did not proceed on the strict principles of legal retribution which pertain to a perfect moral government; for, as we shall see hereafter, the clear exhibition of a future state and of an economy of grace forbid such a conclusion. Or rather the fact that he gave a perfect law of a perfect government in connection with these facts, amounted to a full confirmation of the reality of a perfect moral government and the import of its sanctions. Now add to these considerations the truth that God assumed the relation of a national king, with the facts which it involves, As such he shows himself rigidly exact in respect to its every principle and requirement. He promises in the most absolute forms to award earthly happiness to obedience under the civil constitution, and to do this even by a course of extraordinary and miraculous providence. But if God promised to do, and did actually do this -- if after proving the reality of a perfect moral government, he subverted the laws of nature in the rigid execution of this lower kind of moral government, conferring earthly happiness as the reward of external conformity to the law, for such, in effect, was the known fact -- with how much higher approbation must he regard, and with what richer gifts would he bless the sinless obedience of a perfect heart? In this system of national law it was manifest beyond all denial, that the demand in respect to action went far beyond the condition on which, in effect, its reward of earthly happiness was promised and on which it was given. The demand was for spiritual religion holiness of heart; the condition of the promise was in effect the mere external appearance of what was demanded. What then but perverseness or criminal stupidity could infer, that by the most blameless external conformity one could satisfy the omniscient King? If men were justified and rewarded on such principles by a national

ruler, would not the Searcher of hearts -- the perfect moral governor -- give a higher reward to him who should fully meet the demand of his perfect law by the homage of a perfect heart? I know that the error, the capital error of the Jew was in thinking that the demand of the law required external obedience only, and that this would secure the favor of God. But which was the most rational inference from the premises -- that because the national king awarded earthly good for external obedience for the mere show of obedience, this was the full measure of his demand; or, in view of the express and unqualified nature of the demand as reaching to the heart, and of the facts which showed the reality of his moral government under a gracious economy -- that a spiritual obedience would secure a still higher reward? Surely no degree of intellect which makes a man rational, if unperverted, could fail to adopt the latter conclusion. The reproofs and denunciations from God for the want of spiritual service -- the homage of the heart on the part of the people -- show how he expected them to reason on this subject.

Here the question might arise, whether these views and those like them in Lecture IV. do not require a double sense or meaning to the language of this part of the Mosaic code? This question must be decided by those principles by which we assign to language its meaning. Now one way in which words as the signs of ideas, become precise and definite in their import is by prior use: such import is so definite that there are some meanings which in ordinary use they cannot possess. Thus according to this law the word tree cannot denote the same thing as the word man, nor the phrase the land of Canaan the same thing as the word heaven. To admit any other principle in deciding the meaning of language in its ordinary use, would be to introduce confusion into its use, if not to destroy it as the vehicle of thought altogether. No one can assign a higher place or influence to usage in determining the import of language than I do. It is that, and that only which gives to words what may be called their proper meaning, and their only fixed or permanent meaning so far as they have any. It is of course the only criterion of deciding what that proper meaning is. If then words can never be properly used except in their primary proper meaning, the question concerning their being properly used in a double meaning would be settled at once.

But it is to be remembered that prior use is not the only criterion of the meaning of a speaker. The meaning of language and the meaning of a speaker are often two things. The true and only meaning of language as determined by usage, may be called its proper meaning. Any other meaning which the writer or speaker shows by legitimate evidence to be intended by him in the use of it, may be called accidental. Prior use is only one way of ascertaining this intention of a writer or speaker, or rather it is in all cases a decisive criterion, except the writer or speaker furnishes decisive evidence that he uses language in some other import than that which has thus been assigned it. But if he does furnish such evidence, whether by definition or otherwise, that he intends to convey another meaning, then the meaning which he thus shows that he intends to convey is his real meaning. Such a use of words is always an authorized use provided the speaker furnishes some sure criterion of deciding his real meaning. Usage decides that we must use words in the sense which prior use has given them, or show clearly that we use them in some other sense, and in what sense.

Let it then be kept in mind, that in determining the meaning of language, as that which the speaker intends to convey to the hearer -- that in judging of his intended meaning, prior usage as it fixes the meaning of words is one kind of evidence, and one which, unless other decisive evidence be furnished of another meaning, is ever to control interpretation; that, nevertheless, prior use is not the only evidence of a speaker's meaning, nor can it by any means set aside other decisive evidence of a different meaning; that the meaning of language is not lost nor in the least degree obscured on the principle now stated, for in both cases, decisive evidence though different in kind is furnished of the intended and real meaning; and that when this is done, whether it be the evidence resulting from prior use, from definition, or from a representative system, language is properly used, and is to be interpreted according to the manifested intention and design of him who uses it.

What this evidence is which proves an accidental or acquired meaning to be the real meaning of a speaker, is an inquiry which deserves the attention of every interpreter of language. I cannot enter now into the

consideration of it to any extent. It is however, important to my object to show that what I have called the mode by inference and representation, constitutes decisive evidence on this point. In regard to the former I remark, that nothing is more easy or common than to use language in such a manner, that in view of known facts and in particular circumstances, it shall, in the way of palpable inference, turn the mind to something beyond the proper import of the language used; and this, as certainly and as clearly as any direct and literal phraseology could do. In such a case there can be no doubt of the speaker's design to convey the inference itself to the mind of the hearer; and accordingly, we decide by this true and only criterion, the inferential meaning to be a part, and frequently the principal part of his real meaning, and often also his only meanings. Nor does this mode of speaking lead to any confusion or peculiar liability to mistake. For it is always attended with decisive evidence of the real design of the speaker. It is therefore as easy to distinguish such an inference from one which, though legitimate, is not intended, as to distinguish, (as we always must,) the real from the possible meaning of direct literal expressions by attendant evidence. At all events, let the inference be manifested as I have supposed, and let it involve personal reproach and insult, and we never fail to regard it as intended.

In connection. with this mode, that of representation or of exhibiting one thing by another, may also exist, as has been shown in Lecture IV. When these concur, the evidence of the real meaning of the speaker is peculiarly decisive. The latter however, when existing alone as a common and well-understood mode of conveying knowledge, is scarcely less satisfactory than that by words used in the import which usage has given them. I am aware that the contrary is extensively supposed to be true, and that the mode of conveying truth by representation is also supposed to be peculiarly vague and peculiarly liable to abuse. That it has been and is still greatly abused, I readily admit. But it is not more abused or perverted than language when used according to the laws of actual usage.

It admits of a question, I think, whether this mode involves any peculiar

obscurity in itself considered, compared with that of literal language, and whether what we call the obscurity of the Old Testament on some subjects does not consist rather in the less frequent repetition of some truths, as that of a future state; and in less specific statements of others, as that respecting the office and work of the Messiah. It may be in a given case more obscure than literal language, but the question is, can it not be made as clear?

I need not say that the abuse of it furnishes no reason against the use of it. Nor do I admit that it is especially liable to abuse. True indeed, it would be so if we might, as some actually do, regulate, limit or extend our interpretation of such language by the mere fact of resemblances, and this by giving the reins to fancy and conjecture; or if we might discard all those principles and laws of evidence which are to guard and limit and guide the interpretation of such language. And so the same disregard of fixed principles, the same lawlessness in interpreting other language, would lead and I may say has in fact far more frequently and extensively led to similar results. The question then is, not whether this mode of interpreting language has been in fact perverted and abused -- for what mode has not been? -- the question is, whether it is not as strictly and definitely and plainly guarded by certain principles and laws of interpretation as any other? I could not well express more abhorrence than I feel for any mode of eliciting the import of the sacred oracles which dispenses with the severe logic of interpretation, suffers the imagination to run riot in tracing resemblances and analogies, and sanctifies its results by the pretense of some second sight or sense as a peculiar prerogative of the interpreter. It is true indeed that the natural man, the man enthralled by groveling appetite and passion, discerneth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them. Such a man under such mental tyranny must be a miserable interpreter of the lively oracles of God. His very intellect by the had dominion of this state of mind, is not only unfurnished with the first principles, the very elements of successful interpretation, but is stupefied and cramped as to all vigorous action on such subjects. The soul's constitutional discernment is peculiarly blunted in respect to the beauty, and weight, and excellence of divine realities, and disqualified for that perception which is necessary to give them their practical influence. In this state of sinful enthrallment the man cannot

appreciate, nor apprehend, nor successfully judge of the things of God's revelation. But then this same man, as truly as any other man, has those powers and properties of the soul which may be roused from this state of dormancy and inaction; his susceptibilities to other objects than those which now engross him may be touched and excited; his intellect may be awakened and directed to those matters of unwonted attention; and then he must and may learn what is the meaning of the Spirit, by the self-same mental process, and by the self-same laws of interpretation, as those by which the most privileged saint must learn it. To talk of any other mode of discovering the import of God's revelation than the healthful and earnest use of the mental powers, influenced indeed in some cases by the Spirit of truth, but employed with honest intention on the materials of discovery, and directed by the sober well-known laws of interpretation, is enthusiastic dreaming.

These principles I shall now attempt to illustrate and confirm in respect to scriptural language, having a special reference to the general subject before us. I remark --

1. That the Sacred Scriptures abound in instances in which language has a proper and accidental meaning, i.e., a double sense. Here I wish it to be remarked that I do not attribute two proper meanings to the same language, i.e., two senses, both of which are acquired by usage. When words by a change of import acquire by usage a further meaning than their original meaning, then the whole comprehensive import is not two meanings, but one comprehensive proper meaning, because usage now assigns this as the meaning, and there is therefore no longer any distinctive mark by which the parts of the meaning can be distinguished and pronounced two meanings. One part is decided to be included in the proper meaning on the same ground as is the other, viz., that of usage. But when words are used in a meaning not acquired by usage, and this in addition to the meaning which is acquired by usage, then there is a distinctive mark or characteristic in these meanings by which they may be distinguished and regarded as two meanings. Now if I mistake not, it has been simply and solely from overlooking this fact, that some have become so zealous in contending against a double sense. They have

seen with great clearness that words can have but one proper meaning; that whether it be more or less comprehensive, still as a proper meaning, a meaning acquired by usage, it is but one; that the parts of it cannot be distinguished as two by any distinctive characteristic, both being determined to belong to the language on the same ground, viz., usage. But while they, have seen this on the one hand, they have not seen on the other, that words may be used, and if their meaning is ever enlarged or extended must be used, in an accidental meaning, i.e., a meaning not acquired by previous usage; that this meaning, though as real as the proper meaning, is still arbitrary in this first instance, and must remain so till subsequent usage shall render it the proper meaning, and that still it is that which is intended by the speaker as really as any meaning can be. What therefore they contend for is very true, viz., that no language can originally possess two proper meanings or senses. In other words, terms have in no instance two primary meanings. To this of course I fully subscribe. But what I maintain is, that words may have two senses, the one being a proper sense, the other an accidental sense, i.e., the one being the sense of prior usage, the other a sense or meaning which the speaker intends to convey to the mind being manifested by some other evidence than that of prior usage. If these remarks be just, then the controversy about a double sense, as I before intimated, is a mere dispute about words, or rather a controversy resulting from the want of correct definition.

In proof of my position as I have explained it, that much of the language of the Sacred Scriptures has a double sense, or is used to convey two distinct meanings, I refer to the parables of the Scriptures, and what I maintain is, that the language of these has both a proper and accidental meaning as I have explained these terms. Take as an example the parable of the prodigal son. "A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said unto his father," &c. Now the question is not whether this is not a fictitious or false narrative, nor whether our Lord is to be justified in giving a false narrative in such a case. Both are admitted. But a real meaning belongs to false propositions as well as to those which are true. The falsehood of the narrative therefore, instead of precluding, implies a real meaning which is false. Falsehood or fiction can be predicated of nothing else but of some real meaning of the terms.

What propositions then are false in the present instance? Why that "a certain man had two sons," and every proposition in the parable. Every proposition in the parable therefore has a meaning which is false. And if this were not so -- if the language had no meaning which is false, it can have none which is true; for divest it of all meaning according to the usage of terms both true and false, and it becomes absolutely destitute of all meaning and wholly useless in its design. As another test, I ask, can any one read this parable and not bring the image of the returning son and the glad father distinctly before the mind and home to all its sensibilities? Do we not find this touching, melting family scene possessing our thoughts and feelings in spite of ourselves; is it not necessary that it should be so to secure the ultimate effect of the parable; and was not this intended by the speaker? What brings these thoughts and feelings into the mind but the language of the parable? Here then is one meaning, viz., the proper meaning of the words -- their meaning according to usage actually and clearly conveyed, unavoidably conveyed, and designedly conveyed to the hearer. And if this is not a real meaning of the language, nothing can be. But will any one say that our Lord intended to convey no meaning by the language of this parable except that which is false? Did he not also intend to convey one which is true, and a meaning too not pertaining to the language of the parable according to any prior usage? Is it not most manifest that by the phrase two sons, our Lord intended to designate Jews and Gentiles, and by the word father, God himself; and thus to turn the minds of his hearers as truly and intently on these objects as objects of thought, as had he used these words themselves? This will not be denied. It is manifest then that in this parable, and the same is true of every other, the design of the speaker is to use language in its proper meaning, and through this meaning which is justifiably false, to turn the thoughts of his hearers to a substantial reality, which is therefore another and a very diverse meaning of his language. And I flatter myself after what has been said, that these meanings are justly distinguished as two.

But if language may have two distinct meanings when one of them is false, it would seem a fortiori, that it may have two meanings when both of them may be true. As examples of this I refer to the following:

(Gen. iii. 15.) "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." That this language has what I have termed a proper meaning, and describes the aversion of mankind to serpents and their practice of destroying them, I cannot doubt. Indeed to deny it, seems to me to involve the rejection of the most decisive evidence of the meaning of language which can exist in any case; I mean the exact agreement between the meaning of words as fixed by usage, and known facts or things -- e. g., that horse is black. Who that knows the meaning which words have acquired by usage and has eyes to see, can doubt in such a case the meaning of the speaker.

That the passage also conveys another meaning, which the words according to usage do not express, is placed equally beyond doubt by the known facts in the case, as well as by apostolic allusions. Our first parents, could not be ignorant of him by whom their ruin was accomplished, nor fail to understand from this assurance, that this enemy of man was to be vanquished by one born of a woman. The allusions of the apostle to this destroyer under the name of the serpent, and as the introducer of sin and death into this world, with their declarations that the Son of God was manifested to destroy him that hath the power of death, and that Satan should be bruised under the feet of his followers, are sufficient to convince us of the reality of the second and improper meaning of the passage under consideration.

As another example I refer to Gen. xvii. 8. That this language had its proper meaning, and that God did here truly promise to Abraham the literal country of Canaan, is evident not only from the agreement between words and things, but from the undeniable facts that the promise was both understood and fulfilled in this import. That this language possessed another, and what I have called a representative meaning, is also placed beyond a question by many considerations as well as by the context. Abraham, it will be admitted, had some just knowledge of God. He had also a knowledge of a future state. He had been expressly told that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed. The Almighty had promised to be his exceeding great reward. Such a man must have

known how to estimate the favor and friendship of his covenant God; how to trust his grace and to measure his promises. Could this friend of God then have heard this covenant repeated again and again; could he have listened to this promise of an earthly country, and know as he did that he was a stranger and a pilgrim on earth and was to live forever beyond the grave, and doubt the design of his Maker to carry his thoughts and his hopes upward to a better country, even an heavenly? Let us look also at the accompanying assurance, I will be thy God. Had this friend of God then confined his expectations to mere earthly good, would he not have degraded this great and precious promise in a manner altogether unworthy of its import and its author? What it was for God to be the God of Abraham in the days of Christ, we know. He was not the God of the dead but of the living. He was the same when the promise was made. How then could Abraham, how could any one hear the promise of the land of Canaan, made in such circumstances and in such a connection, and fail to look for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God? Without then adverting to the declarations of the apostle that the Gospel was preached unto Abraham, and that this covenant with him comprises that Gospel in all its promises of grace and of glory, it is sufficient to settle the question before us, that I have stated the fact as stated by the apostle, and adopted the same argument to prove it. (Vide Heb. xi. 8-16.)

But I proceed to consider the language of the Scriptures, particularly that of the Old Testament. I refer --

First, to the language used to express the legal reward of obedience under the Mosaic law. Whenever the legal reward of the Mosaic law is described, I suppose the language has what I have called a representative meaning, and as it teaches that obedience to the national law (this being decided on according to the principles before stated) is entitled to the specified reward while continued, so it as clearly teaches or asserts that obedience to the law of God's perfect moral government while continued, is entitled to its reward. This view of the subject shows with what decisive conclusiveness Paul, when discussing the subject of justification under the perfect government of God, cited the passage from

the Mosaic code, "The man that doeth them, shall live in them."

Secondly, I refer to the use of the word life to denote the reward to be graciously given to the imperfectly holy. As the national government of God was administered under a gracious economy, so was his perfect moral government. As the word life was used in some cases to denote the gracious reward under the former, so it would at first in such a use and in the case of the true penitent, denote also the reward promised to such under God's perfect moral government, i.e., eternal life. This would of course be a transferred meaning. Now as I said, words often change their meaning, and a transferred or representative meaning by usage becomes the more usual meaning, and may even exclude the literal meaning altogether. This change, by which the latter meaning is wholly excluded, is especially natural and common when the new meaning respects what is by far the most important and prominent relation or truth, and more especially when it is that in which there is most occasion to use the word, and still more especially when there is no occasion to use it in any other meaning. As then the doctrine of a future happy life to the truly penitent was compared with a life of mere earthly good, pre-eminently important, and as this doctrine in the progress of divine revelation was more extensively understood by the people, and more frequently alluded to or dwelt on by their religious teachers, the word life was not only the term most naturally adopted to express this truth, but it lost, occasionally at least, its former and inferior meaning, and at length when the national law ceased, it lost it altogether. Of this the following examples will be sufficient (Ps. xvi. 11): "Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is the fullness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." Nothing can be plainer than that the Psalmist here had no reference to earthly good; and surely he was not looking to these pleasures for evermore as the reward of sinless obedience. Prov. xii. 28: "In the way of righteousness is life, and in the pathway thereof there is no death." If any further proof of the fact before us respecting this Jewish usage were necessary, it would be sufficient to refer to the language of the Saviour and of his apostles: "He that hath the Son hath life," &c.

The above examples are not referred to, to prove that in every instance in

the Old Testament in which life is promised to the penitent, it is not to be understood as having at the time a double import, instead of this exclusive import, acquired by usage. In Ezekiel, xviii., for example, it may have a double, i.e., a proper and a transferred meaning. This remark is of importance, because it shows how entirely unessential it is in such cases to decide this question, in order to justify us at this age of the world in quoting this class of passages in the Old Testament, as having exclusively the latter meaning. For if they had a double meaning at the time, then they had the latter meaning, and this to us is strictly their only important meaning; or rather, in respect to us, they have lost their former meaning, but retain fully and perfectly the latter, and are therefore to be quoted accordingly.

In respect to the law of Eden, I observe that it clearly teaches that so long as our first parents were obedient they should not die, i.e., should live; and what the life promised is, is inferred with entire satisfaction from what we have said of the Mosaic law in connection with the fact that the law of Eden is given in the language of Moses and is Jewish language. For if the principle of reward was developed by the Mosaic law in the manner supposed, it must have been understood, if justly understood by Moses and by those for whom he wrote, to have been the same in Eden.

LECTURE XII: THE NATURE OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT AS REVEALED.

Section 5 continued, viz., The law In the import of its sanctions -- 2. The penalty of the law. -- The nature of the penalty, viz., temporal death and eternal suffering. -- The penalty originally denounced, general and indefinite. -- Temporal death, as it now occurs to all men, not penal. The sentence In Gen. M. 19 not a part of the legal penalty. -- Spiritual death not penal. -- Proof of Prop. -- The temporal death of the Mosaic law taught eternal death without mercy. External obedience clearly shown not to suffice. -- The words to die and death. -- Illustration from the double or extended meaning of exile under certain supposed circumstances. -- Death and to die used in the Old Testament with this additional meaning. -- Additional considerations. Book of Ecclesiastes. -- Enoch and Abraham. -- Prayer of Balaam. -- Destruction by the deluge, and of Sodom and Gomorrah. -- Argument from the New Testament.

THE object is first to state and explain what I understand to be the penalty of the divine law, and secondly, to justify the statement by proof. I propose --

1. To state and explain what I understand to be the penalty of the divine law.

I suppose this penalty to consist in the cessation of existence here on earth, and the greatest possible misery forever in a future state.

I here use language which is in some respects indefinite, in order to comprise all that the penalty included, as originally denounced. It is supposable that the language or the mode adopted of conveying knowledge on this subject should not specify minutely all that the penalty in fact included; and it is quite possible, not to say probable, that we

should be able to show from a subsequent revelation, that it did comprise specific things, which it was not understood to include, either by our first parents or by Moses. Nor does the use of such general phraseology involve the lawgiver in reproach; for the language may be broad and comprehensive enough to cover all that is made known by a subsequent and more specific development of its import.

By this mode of presenting the subject, I avoid what seems to have occasioned perplexity and not a little discussion. For example, were we to say that the penalty in its original form included and expressed the destruction of both soul and body (considered as the language of Moses), it might be difficult to prove our position; for the resurrection of the body and its future union with the soul in a state of suffering may be regarded as not very clearly revealed in his time. Still, this may have been actually comprised in the penalty; the form of promulgation may be sufficiently comprehensive to include it, and subsequent revelation fully disclosed it.

Again: when I say that the penalty included the cessation of existence on earth, I do not mean that temporal death as it now takes place among men, is in every instance, and as an event common to all men, a penal evil or legal sanction. In the case of those who die in their sins, it is doubtless a real part of the evil, which constitutes the legal penalty as a whole. It is doubtless so regarded by God, and in those cases in which we have proof of the one fact we have proof of the other. Thus the signal destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone was regarded. (2 Peter, ii. 6, and Jude, ver. 7.)

Temporal death, considered as an event to which all men are subject, is a very different thing from temporal death inflicted on the finally impenitent as the commencement and a constituent part of the legal penalty. As an event common to all, i.e., both Jews and Gentiles, it is the consequence of Adam's sin, though not without their being sinners. Accordingly, the inhabitants of the old world and of Sodom and Gomorrah, would have died, had they not died by signal judgments. Although then temporal death when it comes to the impenitent, is in fact a part of the penalty; although when brought on men by the signal interpositions of God in

vindictive judgment it is to be so regarded by us; and although in all cases it is to be regarded as an expression of God's displeasure in some degree toward sin, yet it is not in all cases to be regarded as an evil sustaining the penal relation. It may be properly said to be part of the penalty, or a part of the evil which penalty includes, but as a part it is not a penal evil. Aside from the inconsistency of this supposition with the death of those who by faith are delivered from the curse of the law, and with the fact that temporal death in respect to them is destroyed and is strictly not an evil, it is evident from the account of the introduction of death into the world, that considered as the inheritance of all men, it does not sustain the relation of a penal evil. Nor is this at all inconsistent with the fact that it does constitute in some cases a part of the legal penalty. Whatever may be the parts of that evil called penalty, the whole and not the parts are the penalty. The peculiar relation or characteristic which we call venal, or which constitutes it a legal penalty, is predicable of the whole and of none of the parts. If forty stripes save one constitute the penalty of a law, then in a case of the actual infliction, every stripe is a part of the penal evil. But as apart it is. not penal, since that cannot be truly affirmed of a part which is true only of the whole. Nor is this inconsistent with the fact that one stripe should be inflicted under some other relation in another case, even as the dictate of kindness. Indeed, nothing can be plainer to my mind than that the original sentence, "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return," was not pronounced in execution of the penalty of the law, "Thou shalt surely die." I shall have occasion to resume this topic hereafter. I only remark now, that temporal death here denounced on the whole, human race, was one among other evils to which they were doomed under an economy of redemption from sin and its curse, and was not therefore the curse itself, nor as a part of the complex evil which constitutes the legal penalty, does it sustain a penal relation.

Further: I remark here that I do not consider spiritual death, or continuance in sin, as properly any part of the legal penalty. It may be that he who once sins against God will with absolute certainty continue to sin, and it is unquestionably true that the threatening of complete misery from the lawgiver, must prevent all effectual interposition on his part to restore a transgressor to holiness, under a merely legal dispensation; it

may even require that he place the transgressor in circumstances that will result in continued sin. The natural evil or misery attendant or consequent on continued sin may be a part of the penal evil. But it does not follow that the sin itself is therefore specifically threatened, or that it exists as an evil under the relation of legal penalty. The threatening may in a similar manner imply the continued existence of the transgressor, since otherwise its execution would be impossible. There may be as real a ground of the certainty of continued sin as there is of continued existence, and the former may be as necessary to the full execution of the penalty in the complete misery of the transgressor as the latter, and yet it would be far from correct and precise phraseology to speak of either as a part of the legal penalty. Similar remarks apply to the sinner's capacity of suffering, to his condition and circumstances, so far as these are necessary to the full execution of the penalty.

Further: it has been shown that nothing but natural evil, and this only as it is an expression of the lawgiver's disapprobation of sin, can constitute legal penalty. But sin considered merely as sin, is not a natural evil, i.e., it is not itself pain or misery. The choice of the inferior good viewed abstractly from the knowledge or conviction that the good chosen is the inferior good, and also from the effects which we ascribe to conscience, and from fear, regret and other similar states of mind, is not painful. It is true that pain or misery may be the invariable attendant of such a choice, because the appropriate causes of the pain may always co-exist with the choice. The intellect may always perceive the folly of it and this will occasion painful regret; and conscience may always operate in the production of painful self-reproach. But the operations of the intellect and conscience are not the pain felt, but the cause of it. So the act of will or the choice is not the pain, but only that which with these operations of intellect and conscience, is necessary to the existence of the pain felt. Or if we regard sin as a complex thing made up of acts of intellect, conscience and will, still it is not itself painful, but simply the cause or occasion of pain to the mind, the pain being the effect of the complex acts which constitute the sin. There is of course no more propriety in pronouncing sin, whether we mean by it the act of the will simply or the complex state of mind just described, to be in itself pain or natural evil, than there is in pronouncing the operations of the intellect and

conscience which produce pain the pain itself; nor of course in pronouncing the sin a part of the legal penalty, than in so pronouncing the operations of intellect and conscience; and of course no more in pronouncing either a part of the legal penalty, than there is in pronouncing a cause an effect. It is true that in the looseness of popular language this is often done -- it is often done in this very case. Nor have I any objection to the use of the language now referred to for popular purposes; as, for example, when sin is said to be in itself unhappiness or misery, and even the greatest of evils. But my objection is, that such popular propositions, Which in terms are loose though not ambiguous in import. should be applied (for such is the fact) out of their true import to the analytical inquiry before us. The truth is, that misery is so associated with sin as its consequent, that in popular language it is itself according to abundant usage pronounced misery. Being thus in words pronounced a natural evil in itself, the way is prepared (for what on a superficial view of the matter seems like entire consistency), actually in thought, to distinguish sin itself as natural evil from all the natural evil of which it is the cause or occasion, and on the ground that all natural evil enters into the penalty of the law, to pronounce it thus distinguished, a part of the legal penalty. Now who does not see the fallacy of this process of reasoning? The popular proposition that sin is itself unhappiness, has not the meaning which this reasoning gives it. The popular proposition is not intended to separate the sin from the unhappiness connected with it, and to make the one distinct from the other, as they obviously are distinct. And hence in this reasoning, the proposition that sin is itself unhappiness is applied as if they were not distinct. Thus it is that the revolting conclusion is obtained, that God threatens sin with sin -- threatens the violation of his law with its violation -- threatens the acts of a free voluntary agent with the acts of a free agent.

Such a law among men would be regarded as a burlesque on all legislation. And when we reflect that all our views of the moral government of God must be derived and modified by an ultimate reference to our views of human governments, it must I think be regarded as incredible, that what would be regarded as so preposterous an enactment in a human legislature, does in fact find place in the perfect moral government of God. The first sin of any being is a punishment of

sin, i.e., sin is punished before it exists -- punished for his holiness, or at least for his innocence!

If any should say that all this is refined metaphysical speculation, I will not deny it. I have however, this reason for it: that the argument for the doctrine that spiritual death is a part of the penalty, derives its entire plausibility from the metaphysics of its premises, and that it is impossible to unfold its fallacy except by the same mode of reasoning. Thus the argument takes a popular proposition and turns it from its true import into one of a minute metaphysical import, assumes the truth of this import and rests its conclusion upon it. This is undeniable. For let the popular position be understood to mean simply what it does mean in popular usage, viz., that sin and misery are inseparably associated as cause and effect, and it is at once seen to be very different from that which asserts that sin is itself misery viewed abstractly from its effects; and thus the conclusion built on this position is overthrown.

Again: according to the principle that nothing can constitute legal penalty but natural evil, and this only, as it becomes an expression of God's disapprobation of sin, sin itself can be no part of the legal penalty. For how can the fact that God renders sin certain, express his disapprobation of sin? Indeed what is more palpably absurd than to suppose that God should inflict sin as a punishment of sin -- should cause sin to exist forever, to show his disapprobation of it? Nothing is plainer than that God, on the present supposition, must be regarded as giving existence to sin in such a manner that its existence may answer the end of legal penalty. But who does not see the gross incongruity of the supposition. that God should give a perpetual and eternal existence to that which he supremely hates and abhors, as the method of showing his abhorrence to it?

Again: sin cannot with the least propriety be regarded as an event whose existence so depends on God, as its relation to law as a legal penalty requires that it should. Sin in its very nature is the act of a free moral agent. It is not a thing suffered from the hand or agency of another; but an act done by the accountable agent himself; a thing entirely within the

power and at the disposal of the transgressor himself. It can therefore never be regarded as an evil coming from the hand of God, in such a manner as to become a part of the legal penalty. Nor is this all: the supposition that God renders sin certain as a part of the legal penalty, makes it the necessary means of the greatest good, and thus annihilates its nature. But according to the views which I may consider as satisfactorily established, God does not, and cannot as a consistent moral governor, purpose sin as the necessary means of the greatest good, nor purpose its existence in any respect what ever, except as incidental in respect to his prevention to the best system, and therefore purposes it in no sense which is inconsistent with an unqualified preference of holiness to sin, in every instance in which sin does exist. So every subject of God's government with just views of his purposes must regard them. How then can the existence of sin be regarded as purposed of God to subserve the end of upholding his moral government, or as the necessary means of this end? And if not, how can it be supposed to be a part of the penalty of his law?

Should it be said that as continued sin is necessary to the complete execution of the penalty (since none but a sinful being can be completely miserable), God must have purposed its continuance as the necessary means of executing the penalty. I should deny the premises. It is not true that the complete execution of the penalty requires the complete misery, but only the highest possible misery. So that if we suppose a transgressor to reform under law, and God to make him as miserable as possible, the penalty is fully executed. It may be and doubtless is a fact that complete misery is threatened, not on the supposition that he who once sins will afterward become holy, but in view of the fact, that the character which the subject of law voluntarily assumes in an act of sin is, an unchangeable character. For aught that can be shown to the contrary, it may be assumed, that he who sins under a given influence of moral government will never under the same influence reform, and that that degree of moral influence which God, as a moral governor and under a merely legal dispensation, brings upon every subject at a given time, is as great as the perfection of this system demands or allows. In this view of the subject, not only the sin but the perpetuity of it are both incidental to the best system. The perpetuity of sin therefore, cannot be regarded

as purposed of God as the necessary means of inflicting complete misery; but the penalty is to be viewed as made to consist in complete misery in view of the perpetuity of sin when once committed. Indeed the difficulties and objections pertaining to any other view of the subject lead me to the belief, that a subject of God's moral government is by the very nature and circumstances of it when existing in its perfection, called upon to choose God or an inferior good as his portion once for all; and that choose which he may, if there be no change in the system there will never be a change in his character. His act of choice will be for once, and immutable forever. Being made with the knowledge that it is a choice by which he becomes, in the lowest degree of it, a decided enemy of God and of all good -- a choice which will continue one and the same during his immortality, which will strengthen by continuance, and which remaining one and the same choice or purpose of heart, will lead to open acts of malice and blasphemy against God. I say with this knowledge, the transgressor does in his first act of sin become, ipso facto, an eternal rebel against God. There is in the first act a real and virtual consent to all sin. Nor is this in principle any excessive refinement. For says an apostle, "Whoso shall offend in one point is guilty of all." He who in heart violates one precept of the law does really violate every other, for the thing and the only thing which the law in fact forbids, is that state of heart which violates the supposed precept. ("Cursed is every one," &c.; "He that hateth his brother is a murderer.") Nor is this view of the subject inconsistent with the fact that the guilt and sufferings of a transgressor should increase. As the same disease may increase in virulence and in anguish, so may the selfsame sin. And here I would remark, that I regard that as an erroneous view of the subject, which represents the wicked in a future world as committing a succession of separate sins, each having its own appropriate measure of ill-desert, and the sinner as suffering the punishment for one and then for another in similar succession. The Scriptures and reason present another view, viz., that the commission of sin brings the curse, the full penalty, and warrant us to assert that although the wicked hereafter grow worse and worse, and suffer more and more, they never cease to suffer for sin as one act or purpose of rebellion done here on earth. With this act all that ill-desert commenced which is the basis of their continual and complete misery; there pertains to it, when committed, this amount of guilt. And if it be said that it could not incur this amount of guilt were it not to be perpetual, I answer that this depends on what the act of sin involved when committed. And if it could

not exist under a merely legal dispensation and be what it is without being perpetual, it involved all this guilt when committed. The continued sin of the transgressor is not to be viewed as the necessary means of inflicting the amount of suffering implied in the penalty, but the amount of suffering in the penalty is to be considered as threatened and determined on in view of what sin is, as an act of perpetual revolt from God. I conclude, therefore, that Bin cannot, according to any just principles of reasoning, be viewed in any manner or respect whatever as a part of the penalty of the divine law.

Having stated in what I suppose the penalty of the law to, consist, I now proceed --

II. To justify that statement by proof. Here, for reasons already assigned, we resort again to the Mosaic law.

The argument founded on the Mosaic law, viewed as a representative system, would be this: that as the penalty of that law, considered in its relation to man as its subject and as having an earthly or temporal existence, was premature temporal death without mercy; so the penalty of the perfect moral law of God, considered in its relation to man as an immortal being, was eternal death without mercy, or the highest degree of misery forever.

No truth stands out more conspicuously in the Old Testament, than that mere external conformity to the law, though it averted the civil penalty and secured the civil reward, did not avert the wrath and secure the favor of God as a moral governor. It was most clearly taught, that all such sacrifices and all such doings without a holy heart were an offense and an abomination. When God conferred national blessings on the Jews in view of an external reformation, he distinctly declared that it was not for their righteousness, but for his own name's sake and for the love he bore to their fathers, and that they were continually a stiff-necked and rebellious house. The truth was made conspicuous, that they were not all

Israel who were of Israel, and that as children of the flesh they were not children of God. God ever set himself before this people as the searcher of the heart and the judge of all the earth, according to the great principles of a moral administration which were to be illustrated and vindicated in a future state of being. Indeed, in view of the high and holy requirements of God, and especially in view of the acknowledged fact of a future existence, and a future retribution under the government of the true God and the living Jehovah, the Jewish theocracy must have been regarded by every enlightened, honest inquirer after truth, as a most impressive representation of God's more perfect dominion over accountable immortals. Viewed as a merely legal dispensation, the sanctions of the one in all their rigor application, must have exhibited and illustrated the sanctions of the other according to the unbending principles of eternal righteousness. Viewed in its connection with a gracious economy, the gratuitous proffers of earthly good to apparent penitence and through typical sacrifice, must have been regarded as adumbrations to the truly pious of the higher joys revealed by Christian promise, and the solemn threatenings of temporal calamities and death to the perversely wicked, as distinct denunciations of the wrath to come.

Here it would be in point to support, from the New Testament, the view which I have taken of the Mosaic law. To this I have before referred sufficiently to show the decisive nature of the argument.

To see the nature of the argument as furnished by the Mosaic institution itself, is to my own mind alike interesting and important, as it shows not only what that institution was as a revelation of divine truth to Israel, but also develops its utility to us. The force of the reasoning will indeed scarcely be appreciated without more attention to the Old Testament -- a more accurate estimate of its facts and of the character and condition of the ancient Jews -- than is commonly given to the subject. With these in the mind, and by transferring them to ourselves, we should I think be prepared to appreciate the evidence of the point under consideration. Suppose, for example, a similar system to that of the theocracy adopted in respect to this people; suppose our present knowledge of God and of his relations (for though there would be a modified difference between

them and us in this respect, it would not be such as ought to affect the conclusion); suppose also the same reasons to exist in our case as in theirs for understanding the national institute as a system of representation; could we easily conceive of any modo so fitted to impress the mind with the great truths concerning God, and man, and eternity? Suppose we were to witness what they did -- the miracles of Egypt and those at the Red Sea! or were to see and hear God in Sinai!

From this view there of the Mosaic law as a system of representation, I derive my doctrine respecting the legal penalty of God's moral government, as before stated, that as the penalty of the one was temporal death, the penalty of the other was eternal death.

I now appeal also to the language of the penalty, i.e., to the words die and death, as used to describe it both in the Old and New Testament. This import of these words I shall attempt to unfold according to the principles before stated, respecting the language of words and the language of things, as suggesting and representing more than their literal meaning. That I may be the better understood on this part of the subject, instead of repeating the principles already stated, I shall attempt to illustrate them by an example, which shows that these principles are those of constant use and decisive authority.

Let it then be remembered that my object is to illustrate the various meanings of the word death, as descriptive of the legal penalty in different cases as facts and circumstances varied, assuming the primary meaning of the word death to be the cessation of existence on earth.

Suppose then a king, whose empire is visibly confined to a single island - a rich and happy country -- should make the loss of residence in that country the penalty of his law against treason. Of this single expression, were no facts known in the case beyond what the language itself conveys, the import would be very indefinite. Were the subjects so ignorant as not to know whether there was or was not any other country,

they would regard the penalty as involving at least the loss of a residence where they would wish to live -- a departure from their native land. Whatever also they might conjecture as the further consequence, they would regard this evil unmitigated, and in its full extent as the penalty of the crime. This, estimating their guilt and the displeasure of their sovereign by the magnitude of the interests opposed by the crime, would be the only positive definite conception which the language of the law would authorize or require.

Let us now suppose the subjects to know that their king reigns not merely over the small empire of an island, but over a vast continent of empires; that there is a remote and dreary desert which is specified as the place of banishment, and that the king estimates the crime of treason by its true tendency to destroy his extensive empire. Now the same language of the penalty conveys far more than it did before. It necessarily conducts the thoughts to this desert, and though little comparatively might be known of it, a residence there would be unavoidably supposed to be wretched in such a degree, as to express the sovereign's displeasure for the crime of treason against his, great and happy kingdom.

Suppose again, that more extensive and minute information respecting the place of exile should be given; that it should be known as a place where existence could be barely sustained, and sustained under continual suffering from cold and hunger, from nakedness and disease, and amid all the miseries of a community of unrestrained maniacs. Now how expressive and how full of meaning does the language of the penalty become, compared with the case in the first supposition, or that in the second? The single word exile or banishment used to designate the penalty of treason, would unavoidably convey to the mind the full conception of all the known facts in the case, in their appalling combination.

Let us now suppose that all the subjects of the king unite in one universal conspiracy and revolt, and that the sovereign, instead of an immediate execution of the legal penalty, provides a plan of forgiveness and

restoration to his favor, proffering both on condition of returning to duty, but declaring nevertheless that all, whether they comply with the terms of forgiveness or not, shall be exiled from their country; that those who do comply shall dwell in a city prepared for their residence, where they shall enjoy a far more happy existence than they can enjoy in their native land; and that those who do not, shall suffer the entire penalty of the law. Now when the word exile or banishment is used, it will unavoidably be seen how diverse its meanings are in different connections. To speak of the exile of those who have complied with the terms of forgiveness, is, in fact, to speak of the happiest event of their earthly being; but to speak of the exile of the perverse and unsubdued rebel, is to speak of all that is dreadful.

I shall now attempt to show, that what I supposed respecting the language of the king's law against treason, is true of the language used to describe the penalty of the divine law.

Here then I begin with the primary literal import of the word death, as denoting the cessation of existence on earth, leaving all beyond it so uncertain and dark that even faith has no concern with it. Now whether any of the human race to whom the penalty of the divine law was ever made known were thus ignorant or not, need not here be decided. If they were, and necessarily so, then this restricted view of the import of the penalty was in fact the only penalty to them. But we know that it was not so. (Vide Rom. i. 32.) Even the heathen who do such things as are here specified by the apostle, know that they are worthy of that death which includes indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish."

But the question first to be decided according to the proposed method of inquiry is, what facts were known or believed by the ancient people of God when the Mosaic law was given, which would control and determine their views of the import of its penalty. They knew or believed that man was an immortal being: they, like the Egyptians and other nations, believed in future rewards and punishments, and that the law of God did and must respect them, under other relations than those of a mere

earthly community. Now I maintain that the knowledge or belief of these facts must, except we suppose the grossest perversion of evidence, have controlled their interpretation of the language of penalty, and that they could not but understand the death threatened, as involving the cessation of existence on earth under the hopeless displeasure of God, and of course as including future endless misery. The only possible question is, whether this people did know or believe, or which is the same thing in respect to our argument, might have known the facts specified. But there can be no question on this point. It was the universal doctrine of all nations as well as of the Egyptians, inculcated and enforced on the popular belief, that their gods would reward the good and the bad in a future state. Of course, as I have before said, all that was really necessary to prove to the nation of Israel that the God of Israel will execute such sanctions, was to prove that he was the true God. The question therefore in regard to the knowledge or belief of these great facts can no longer be, a question. But with this knowledge or belief, it is utterly impossible that by the laws of correct interpretation this people should not have understood the legal penalty to be what I have stated it to be. The use and the import of language are always determined by the known facts of the case. And that the penalty of the Mosaic law should not denote what I have supposed, is as impossible as that in the example supposed, the word exile or banishment should not have the meaning supposed; or as that the phrase Solomon's temple, to one who had seen it, should denote the wigwam of an American Indian.

Such we shall see was the fact in regard to its import, as understood and exhibited by those who understood it correctly.

Now it will be admitted that Ezekiel and David and Solomon knew no more on this subject than what was revealed under the Mosaic dispensation. The question then is, what did they mean when they spoke of death as the punishment of sin? And this question is answered by one incontrovertible fact, viz., that this death was a death which in its full import at least, the righteous should not die. But the righteous did die a temporal death. Thus Solomon, for example, while he declares in many and different forms that the wicked shall die as the reward of their iniquity

(Prov. v. 4, 22, 23; viii. 35, 36,; xi. 19), also asserts that "in the way of righteousness there is life, and in the pathway thereof there is no death." (Prov. xii. 28; vide also x. 2; xi. 4; xiii. 14; xiv. 27.) Ezekiel also asserts with peculiar directness, that the soul that sinneth shall die, that the wicked shall surely die; and yet he no less unequivocally asserts that the righteous shall live, and not die. (Ezek. xviii. 21; compare Isa. lxvi. 16, 24; vide also Prov. x. 2; xi. 4; xiii. 14; xxiv. 27.) Now the death from which the righteous are delivered is the death which the wicked suffer. But the righteous are not distinguished from the wicked by exemption from temporal death. The death therefore which the wicked suffer is something compared to which the temporal death of the righteous is not death. Was it natural death in circumstances of peculiar suffering? The righteous often died in such circumstances (vide Heb. xi. 37), being stoned and sawn asunder. The righteous died prematurely or in early life, even "perished in his righteousness" (Eccles. vii. 15). Besides the difference supposed is not such as the case obviously requires, to exhibit the displeasure of that God toward sin, who had adopted such a course of providence to prevent it. Was it then annihilation? But they acknowledged the doctrine of a future state, and therefore could not so understand it. It was death then as the wages of sin; it was death which excluded from the rewards of the righteous and from the favor of God; it was the cessation of existence on earth, under the frown of the Almighty -- death as an expression of his displeasure as a lawgiver, and death to an immortal being, without one ray of hope, of favor, or of happiness from his offended God.

Many other considerations confirm this view of the subject. As to temporal death and calamities, the wise man declares that there is no substantial difference in the estate of the righteous and the wicked, all things happening alike to all. By this we are not to understand that he esteemed the penalty of the Mosaic law as not an evil peculiar to its transgressors, but that in view of their future allotments, which was the theme of his discourse, the difference is not deserving of consideration. As if he said, This world is not, but a future world is the place of just retribution. Again, natural death was without terror to the righteous; they welcomed the event -- they hailed it often with joy. But to the wicked this event was replete with unqualified terror. Now keeping in mind their belief

of a future state, what must have been their views of this event as one so appalling? Further, the promises of eternal life to the righteous throw a strong and clear light on the nature of that death which was the penalty of sin. The only condition of such promises was personal holiness, and therefore in every one of them the truth was clearly revealed that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Beings then who were known to exist forever, dying in sin, were never to see God never to enjoy good in the least degree; were to be excluded from it under his severest displeasure. For here also, let it be remarked, the fact of God's unqualified and extremest displeasure against the wicked was fully revealed, and what evil could immortal beings fail to expect from the wrath of God against sin as exhibited in the Old Testament?

I might here refer to the book of Ecclesiastes, as written in the opinion of some learned men, for the purpose of proving from the light of nature a state of future rewards and punishments. (see Graves on Pentateuch, Vol. II., p. 255, note.) If this was so, how striking a disclosure of the principles of our argument and the conclusion founded on them! But I only refer to some facts which are no less decisive -- I mean those which doubtless were well known in the time of Moses; and first those which exhibit God's dealings with his faithful servants. Take for example those which respect Enoch and Abraham. Now we may assume, as it respects the present argument, that it was a known fact, that these men on the ground of personal holiness were rewarded with the favor of God and everlasting happiness in a future world, one of them being conducted thither by God's miraculous interposition. What is the inference but that there was such a future world that without holiness the inheritance of its joys could never be obtained -- and that the wicked, as the object of God's hopeless displeasure, were doomed to a future existence the very opposite of these holy men?

Such was in fact the view of the wicked themselves, at least in one instance. For what could the prayer of Balaam, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and my last end be like his," import, if there had been in his view no difference between the state of the righteous and the wicked after leaving this world? We know, and he knew, that the most desirable

consideration in the death of the righteous was the hope of future joys. To suppose this prayer to be prompted merely in reference to any general providential difference between the attendant sufferings of the one and those of the other, or by any thing, while he believed the prospects of both for futurity were alike, is to me incredible.

Again: I appeal to the destruction of the old world by the deluge, and of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone. That these are properly regarded as decisive instances of the departure of the wicked from this world to one of endless misery, we are assured from the New Testament. But let us look at the facts themselves, and ask what instruction these must have furnished to God's ancient people on the subject before us. With the knowledge that those destroyed were immortal, of the distinction made between them as wicked on the one hand, and Noah and his family and Lot as righteous on the other, who could suppose that these signal judgments of God terminated in mere temporal death, and this too when Noah and Lot must so shortly die? Could it be supposed that in these cases the legal penalty of the Jewish theocracy, a merely temporal institute, was executed? But this law had no existence. Under such a law therefore they could not have died. But they died under the most signal and awful proofs of God's displeasure. They died too as immortal beings. They died, as the apostle reasons, under another law than that of a theocracy. If the very heathen know that they are worthy of death for their crimes, what must be the conclusion in respect to those whom God destroyed by the deluge, and by fire and brimstone? What must be in store for those who were ushered into eternity under such tokens of the wrath to come?

I might here refer to many passages in the Old Testament which in words describe the penalty of sin to be everlasting.

(Vide Isa. lxvi. 24; Daniel, xii. 2.) "Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." In view of the acknowledged fact of the soul's immortality, there is not only no reason for limiting the language of this class of texts,

but decisive reason for not doing it.

In conclusion, I appeal to the New Testament, not to prove the fact that the penalty of sin is endless, but to prove that it was so understood under the Mosaic dispensation. Here we shall not only find this fact established, but a striking illustration of those principles of using language which I have stated and exemplified. It is then undeniable that our Saviour did assume the doctrine of future endless punishment, and used Jewish phraseology to describe it. So also did the apostles. This they did when the national law with its temporal sanctions had ceased. Nor is this all; it was a doctrine of the popular faith, the Sadducees excepted, and their error our Lord exposed by an argument from the Old Testament. Now let these things be accounted for, unless the Old Testament taught the doctrine of a future state with its retribution in eternal life and eternal death. And in view of the acknowledged fact of the theocracy with sanctions of temporal life and death, let the above usage of language by our Saviour and his apostles be explained, except on the principles which have been stated respecting the change of meaning.

Cor. -- It follows that all those passages in the Old Testament in which life and death, good and evil, blessing and cursing are set before men to induce to holiness and to deter from sin, are properly quoted by us in the New Testament import.

LECTURE XIII: THE NATURE OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT AS REVEALED.

Section 6: The law expresses God's preference of obedience to disobedience, all things considered. -- Two opposite views on this subject possible. -- The first, inadmissible by the language of the law; opposed to the dictates of common sense; self-contradictory and absurd; mistakes an involuntary state for a preference; converts sin into holiness and holiness into sin. -- The second view supported by the language of the law; by God's sincerity &c., &c.; by his own solemn assurances in the Scriptures. -- No texts teach the contrary.

I proceed now to consider the law of this government in -- Sect. 6. -- As an expression of God's preference of obedience to disobedience, all things considered.

We have consulted the dictates of reason on this subject, and now propose to consider it in the light of Revelation.

Before I proceed to show what the Scriptures teach on the subject, I remark that there are two different, and only two different views, in respect to which we need direct our inquiries:

One is, that God expresses in his law simply a preference of obedience to disobedience in themselves considered, or when each is considered in its true nature and tendency; while he also expresses in his revelation, a preference of disobedience to obedience, all things considered, or, of the former to the latter in every instance in which the former takes place, as being the necessary means of the greatest good.

The other is, that God in the circumstances, or under that perfect system of moral government under which he addresses his law to men, expresses a preference of obedience to disobedience, all things considered, i.e., considered in every respect and in every instance of moral action.

I propose to consider these different views of the divine law in the order in which I have now stated them.

I. Concerning the former, I remark --

1. That the language of the divine law not only does not admit of the meaning now expressed, but forbids it. There is not a word in the language, which expresses or implies, or in the remotest manner intimates that God prefers disobedience to his law to obedience, or sin to holiness, all things considered. Much less is there any thing in the language which shuts it down to this meaning. On the contrary, the language of this law in its form or manner of use, is the direct, unqualified, and decisive form which lawgivers have ever employed, and subjects have ever understood to express an absolute preference, all things considered, of obedience to disobedience to law. Such language, therefore, requires this meaning, *de usu loquendi*, the only umpire of propriety, and admits of no other. It is absolutely incredible that the lawgiver should use this language in any other meaning, and not intend to deceive his subjects, especially if he employs it to mean that he prefers disobedience to his law all things considered, to obedience in its stead. If therefore, there be any reason for this interpretation of the divine law, it must be found elsewhere than in the language of the law. And further, it is worthy of remark, that none who thus interpret the divine law pretend to derive their interpretation from the language of the law; but simply and solely from certain peculiar and false notions of Scriptural language as employed on another subject -- the decretive will of God. The argument is this -- that without the interpretation of the law now opposed, its just meaning would be inconsistent with the meaning of the Scriptural language respecting the decretive will of God. Be it so. If just interpretation gives inconsistency or contradiction in the language of the Scriptures, we must admit the inconsistency or contradiction. But we shall see there is no pretense for this alleged inconsistency; and if this be so, then there is not even a pretense that the law of God expresses his preference of obedience to disobedience all things considered, and in all instances in which obedience takes place.

2. The interpretation of the divine law now opposed, does violence to the plain and incontrovertible dictates of common sense, and ascribes a peculiarity to the moral government of God which is incredible. It will not be pretended that the law of any other moral government was ever understood to express such a preference of obedience as that now

supposed. And to show how revolting to the common sentiments of men such a law would be, we have only to suppose its import fully and precisely developed. Suppose then a parent or civil legislator should, in the absolute and unqualified form of a law, require any given act of duty, and should at the same time unequivocally declare that in every instance in which the law should be violated, its violation would be the necessary mean, of the greatest good, and as such be preferred by him to an act of obedience in its stead. Now I do not ask merely whether such a law thus explained by the lawgiver, would not be regarded as something unheard of; but whether it would not be considered as furnishing decisive proof of either insanity or falsehood, and be pronounced by the unhesitating decisions of common sense and sound reason to be worthy either of contempt or execration? When we reflect that God in revealing himself to men as their moral governor, does in fact assume that men are prepared to understand the nature of this relation, and leaves them to the obvious dictates of reason and common sense as the medium of understanding the language of his law, can we suppose that he intended that his law should be understood in a meaning which all the world would regard as absurd and revolting in the law of a human legislator? Is such a peculiarity in the government of God credible? Who made this discovery? Not the people, but theologians; and how were they led to give the law such an interpretation? Simply to maintain its consistency with other errors about decrees.

3. This scheme is self-contradictory and absurd. It is here necessary to advert to the different phraseology used by the advocates of this scheme. Some of their language I regard as unobjectionable, only when used as synonymous with that which I regard as -- entirely false. Thus they often say that God purposes sin, or the existence of sin, all things considered. This is undoubtedly true. But then it is by no means synonymous with the position that God purposes sin rather than holiness, all things considered. God doubtless purposes the existence of sin rather than its prevention (and this is the true meaning of the elliptical statement under consideration), it being considered that the prevention of sin by God required the nonexistence of the best system. This however does not imply a preference of sin to holiness for any consideration whatever, when the existence of one is compared with the existence of the other

under the best system. The doctrine to which I object is that which represents God as preferring sin to holiness, all things considered, under the present system of government, and the thing considered in sin as the ground of the preference, is its relation as the necessary means of the greatest good.

But that I may not misrepresent this doctrine, I would still more minutely exhibit it in the language of its advocates.

It is said then that holiness and sin, or obedience and disobedience, are what they are in their true nature and appropriate tendencies, and that they are nothing more: that whatever good sin may be made the occasion of under the government of God, decides nothing in respect to its true nature and tendencies, i.e., nothing in regard to the thing itself: that although its existence may be NECESSARY, as the occasion by which God can produce greater good than would be the result of universal holiness in creatures, yet its true nature and tendency are only to evil, while the true nature and tendency of holiness are only to good; that therefore the estimate expressed by the Moral Governor simply respects holiness and sin as they are in their own nature and tendencies, i.e., in themselves abstractly from the good which he may bring out of the evil, and that therefore the law of God is a proper expression of his preference as a lawgiver for holiness to sin, although the existence of sin is preferable to holiness in reference to the good of which it is the necessary means.

Upon this I remark, that it contains a palpable inconsistency; in other words, that it comprises two positions, both of which cannot be true. Thus it asserts that sin is what it is in its own nature and appropriate tendency, and that it is properly nothing more; and that it is, thus viewed, wholly evil: and yet it also asserts that in the circumstances in which it exists, it is the necessary means of the greatest good. Now I ask, what is the import of this last position but this, that God being what he is and man being what he is, the moral government of God being what it is and holiness and sin being what they are -- in short, the nature, relations, and

reality of things being what they are, sin in the circumstances in which it exists, is the necessary means of the greatest good? But if this be the meaning of this position, then its meaning is that sin in its true nature and tendency is the necessary means of the greatest good. I assert on high authority, that of President Edwards, "That tendency is truly esteemed to belong to the nature of any thing, or to be inherent in it; that is the necessary consequence of its nature, considered together with its proper situation in the universal system of existence, whether that tendency be good or bad." If then sin in the circumstances in which it exists will produce and is the necessary means of producing the greatest good, according to the real nature and relations of things, or "in its proper situation," &c., then it is the true nature and tendency of sin to produce the greatest good. But this palpably contradicts the position in the same scheme, that the true nature and tendency of sin is only to evil. Both cannot be true.

Notwithstanding the plain contradiction and inconsistency of this scheme, we can be at no loss which of the contradictory positions essentially belongs to the scheme itself. It is unquestionably that which affirms the necessity of sin to the greatest good; for the moment this position is separated from the scheme, its real or its professed object fails. That object is to give an intelligible and satisfactory explanation of the existence of sin, and of the purpose of God in regard to its existence. The explanation is, that it is the necessary means of the greatest good. But if this be denied and rejected from the scheme, it fails utterly to give satisfaction on the question why sin exists, or to show in what respect it is an object of the divine purpose. The scheme itself, by such a denial would be denied and abandoned.

If I be asked whether God may not bring greater good out of the existence of sin and the system with which it is connected, than WOULD HAVE BEEN the result of the obedience which would have been actually rendered under any different system, I reply that there is no doubt of it. But this does not prove that he will or can bring more good out of sin, than would have resulted from the obedience which SHOULD AND MIGHT have been rendered in this system. Of course it does not show

that sin in this system is necessary to the greatest good.

It may be said that God is able and will in fact bring greater good out of the existence of sin, than COULD have resulted from the universal obedience of his accountable creatures, and that thus sin may be desirable, not as having in itself any tendency to good, but as the necessary means of the greatest good. It may be urged as decisive in favor of the distinction between a thing as thus good in itself, and good as the necessary means of good, that as the means of good it has no inherent property in itself, but is entirely dependent on the will and agency of God, and that on the supposition that God brings greater good out of it, than could have resulted from universal obedience, then it is good not in itself, but only as the necessary means of good. I answer that this supposition is inconsistent with itself. For while it asserts that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good, it also asserts that it has no inherent property which fits it to be such a means. But if sin has no inherent property in its own nature that fits it to be the means of good rather than any thing else, then it cannot be the necessary means of good, rather than something else; and therefore to say that it has no such inherent property, and to say that it is the necessary means of good, is to assert a plain contradiction.

Again: sin either has inherent in its nature that property which fits it to be the necessary means of the greatest good through divine agency, or it has not. If it has not, then something else through the divine agency might answer the proposed end as well. If it has such an inherent property, then it is in its own nature fitted to be the means of the greatest good in a respect in which nothing else is, and is therefore in its own nature or tendency better than any thing else as the means of good.

Again: if there be nothing in the nature of sin which fits it to be the means of the greatest good, and if it be true that the supposed result, viz., the greatest good, is not to be ascribed at all to the nature of sin but solely to divine agency, then for aught that appears, divine agency might use any thing else as the means of that good as well as sin. Of course sin is not

the necessary means of that good, for the same divine agency might have produced the same result without the existence of sin as well as with it. A case referred to in illustration of the opinion which I am opposing, will demonstrate the error of that opinion. I mean the crucifixion of the Saviour by wicked hands. It is assumed that in order to the good which results from the atonement of Christ, it was necessary that he should be put to death by a murderous act. Whether it be so or not must depend on the question, whether there was any thing in that sinful deed as such, which was necessary to the fact of an atonement. If there was, then the act may be said to be necessary to the good resulting from this work of divine mercy. But if there was not, then his death, allowing that to be necessary, would, though accomplished in any other manner -- for example, by the direct agency of God, or in the way in which the Saviour suffered in the garden -- have possessed the same atoning efficacy. And to make the error of the above theory still more apparent, let it be supposed that there was that in the act of the murderers of our Lord which was in the nature of things indispensable to the redemption of a fallen world, and that benevolence required that this redemption should be accomplished, and would not the moral quality of the act be at once changed? It would indeed be malice toward an innocent man -- it would be in direct violation of a divine command; but the moment that such malice becomes in its true nature and tendency, and according to the true nature and tendency of things, indispensable to the greatest good, it becomes a matter of duty, and ought to be a subject of precept, according to the only principle that benevolence itself can be decided to be a proper subject of precept.

But it may be said still further, that it may be necessary, in order that sin may be the necessary means of good, that it should be a violation of a divine command, since otherwise it could furnish no occasion for the display of the divine mercy in its remission. I answer, that sin is what it is, independently of the law which forbids it. It is not made sin by being forbidden. That the law is given by a perfect being, may be proof that the act forbidden is sin; but the mere fact of violating a good law does not, strictly speaking, constitute the sin of the act. The act is in its nature sin or it is not, and no law can alter its nature. If it is not in its nature sin, then it would furnish no occasion for the display of mercy, since there can be

no display of mercy in forgiving sin which is not sin. If it be in its nature sin, then it cannot be in its nature the necessary means of the greatest good; for to suppose this, is as we have shown, to suppose that concerning it which wholly changes its moral quality.

4. That which this scheme denominates a preference in the divine mind of holiness to sin, is not and cannot in the case supposed, be a preference, but can be only an involuntary state of mind. I need not say that we properly decide what is possible and what is impossible in respect to volitions, preferences, &c., in the divine mind by the known laws of our own mental operations. I affirm then, that it is absolutely impossible according to these laws, that I should really and truly prefer one object of choice to another viewed in themselves, and at the same time prefer the latter to the former as the necessary means of the greater good. In every act of choice we take into consideration the entire amount of good inherent in and connected with each object, and form our choice or preference in view of the whole. In other words, we never prefer or choose an object because in one respect we esteem it better than another, while yet in another respect we esteem the other as so much better than that, as to possess on the whole a superior value. Let us take an example. Rich fruit and a bitter medicine which is necessary to life are proffered. Now I may desire, i.e., be involuntarily inclined to choose the fruit as better in one respect, or if you please, better in itself than the bitter medicine. It may be true that I should choose the fruit IF my life were not in danger. But is not this all that can possibly be true respecting my state of mind toward the fruit? Can there be a real preference or choice of it in such a case? There is according to the supposition, an actual preference of the medicine as the means of the greatest good. Is there also an actual preference of the fruit? If so, which will be taken? Both cannot be. Which will be when each is actually preferred to the other? But the point is too plain for controversy. Precisely however like the supposed preference for the fruit, which is not preference and can with no propriety or truth be called a preference, is the preference of holiness to sin which is imputed to the Divine Being, and which he is supposed to express in his law, which is no preference. It is merely an involuntary desire or inclination which in all cases precedes choice or preference, and is as truly diverse from an act of the will as any one

mental act or state is from any other. All therefore that can be said with truth on this scheme is, that God has an involuntary desire that men should be holy when holiness and sin are considered in themselves; but instead of preferring holiness to sin on this account, he prefers still as the necessary means of the greatest good, to holiness. The scheme therefore which represents God as preferring sin to holiness as the necessary means of the greatest good, does ascribe that to God which necessarily implies that he neither has nor can have in any sense whatever, a preference of holiness to sin; that his law, interpreted as it must be, is an absolute falsehood, and himself the unqualified approver of sin.

6. This scheme converts the act of man which the Scriptures pronounce to be sin, into duty or moral excellence.

This it does in two respects. (1.) As it asserts it to be the most useful; for, as we have already shown, if sin be the necessary means of the greatest good, then it is such in its nature and tendency, and of course is in its nature and tendency the most useful. But we hold that there is not a plainer truth in morals, than that virtue or moral excellence is founded in its tendency to good. As we have before had occasion to say, it is not the law which makes an action right in a moral sense, but only proves it to be so. The action is right or wrong independently of the law which prescribes it, and is morally right simply and only as it is as a voluntary act which in its nature and relations tends to produce the greatest good. Such according to this scheme is sin. Sin therefore is morally right as the best act of man.

It is so (2.), if we appeal to the known will of the Lawgiver, for according to this scheme God has expressed no will but one, and that is a preference of sin to holiness. Even if we admit the opposite and inconsistent preferences, which this scheme ascribes to the Supreme Lawgiver, still we know at least in respect to all the sin that has been and all that shall be committed, that he prefers it to obedience in its stead. So also as we are told that all men who come into the world will commit

some sin, it follows that some sin in every man even before its commission, is known to be preferred by God to perfect holiness. Indeed if we reflect how long the world has stood, and how much sin there has been in it, how few and solitary are the exceptions furnished by individuals to the universal sinfulness of our race, and that all the sin which has existed has, as the necessary means of the greatest good, been preferred by God to holiness in its stead, the probability is not slight but preponderating with respect to an individual, that he will better please God by disobedience to his law than by obedience. Rather I may say it is matter of absolute certainty. For if God has in one instance preferred sin to holiness -- and surely if he has in all instances in which sin has existed -- then his law is no expression of an opposite preference, and cannot furnish a particle of evidence that he has any other preference than that of sin to holiness. If his law furnishes no such evidence, none is furnished. We are left simply to the known and declared expression of his preference of sin to holiness as the rule of duty.

Many other consequences might be legitimately derived from the scheme now opposed, which are equally revolting and absurd. It might be shown that repentance on the part of a sinner is not only not a duty, but in view of the divine will as the standard of right, is impossible. It might be shown that benevolent action also is not right action, &c., &c.

II. I shall attempt to show the truth of the second view of this subject as before stated, viz., that God in the circumstances or under the system of moral government, under which he addresses his law to men, expresses a preference of obedience to disobedience in every respect and in every instance of moral action.

This I argue --

1. From the language of the law.

I have already remarked that the language of the law is the direct and unqualified language used by men in all legal enactments to express an unqualified preference. I now say that it must be understood to express such a preference. In proof of this I allege the principle that the language used in this instance must be interpreted as it is interpreted when used in similar cases and in a similar form. If not, then how can it convey any meaning to the mind? I admit there may be cases in which reasons may exist for limiting the ordinary import of language; but no reason can be assigned for such limitation here. If it be said that otherwise the Bible is contradictory, and this is all that can be said, I answer, first, that this according to principles before advanced, is an insufficient reason; and secondly, that the Bible is not made contradictory by this interpretation.

2. This being the true interpretation of the language of the law, it follows that if the meaning now given is not the real meaning, there is no sincerity in God's commands.

This is sufficiently obvious from a single illustration. If I invite a friend to my house, or command a child to perform a certain act, and should connect with such an invitation or command the declaration that all things considered I preferred the invitation should not be accepted, or the act should not be performed, should I be counted sincere? How then can God be so accounted? Surely it makes no difference whether the fact is uttered in connection with the command or is capable of being, known from other sources of evidence. It is the fact and not the method in which it is learned, that makes God sincere or false -- that binds man to take him at his word, or releases him from the obligation.

Several other considerations might be urged; such as the metal perfection of God; the nature of the thing required of man; his hatred of sin; the character of the law as holy, just, and good; the essential nature of law as involving an honest and sincere preference of holiness to sin; the design of law as fitted to make men believe the lawgiver sincere, &c. It is sufficient to refer to the frequent and strong assurances which are made by God himself. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in

the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn and live." "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!" "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth." "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." Last of all we have God's own vindication from the charge that is urged by this theory: "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes.

Again: I urge that no valid objections can be derived from opposing texts. If there are texts which, when properly interpreted, teach the contrary, then we are forced to admit that there are contradictions in the Bible. The declarations ought to be very explicit and precise, to lead us to doubt that the law expresses God's preference of holiness to sin. Neither are true.

Acts, iv. 28, and ii. 23, are often referred to. But in these texts nothing more is declared than that God purposed the wicked act by which Christ was crucified. This I cheerfully admit. But the question is, in what respect did he purpose it?

Did he purpose it as the necessary means of the greatest good? Is this distinctly asserted? Is it implied? It is not to the point to say that great good followed the act. The question still returns, whether all this good might not have been secured without the act. Who knows that it could not? And if no one, who shall say that it could not?

(Gen. i. 20.) Here nothing more is said than that God meant or purposed the wicked act of selling Joseph into Egypt to be the occasion of good, as he doubtless does design in respect to all sin. But it is not asserted that

sin, or this sin was preferred as the necessary means of the greatest good.

(Ps. lxxvi. 10.) The meaning of this passage is exhausted by saying that God will cause sin (wrath) to praise him and prevent all that he cannot render subservient to this end. But how does it follow from this that the wrath -- the sin -- is the necessary means of the greatest good?

(Exodus, ix. 16, and Rom. ix. 17.) These passages declare only that God purposed Pharaoh's existence and his acts. But they do not declare that these acts of sin were the necessary means of the greatest good, or of any good.

(Matt. xiii. 14; Mark, iv. 12; Luke. viii. 10.) Christ did not choose to change the system of influences that he had purposed, nor to add to it influences which would secure the conversion. This was for wise reasons; but among these reasons it is not said that their continuance in sin was preferred as the necessary means of the greatest good.

END OF SECTION III.

APPENDIX -- No. I: ESSAY ON JUSTICE AS THE ATTRIBUTE OF A PERFECT MORAL GOVERNOR.

PART I. -- CONCEPTION OF JUSTICE ANALYZED AND EXPLAINED.

Justice defined. -- 1. Justice a benevolent disposition. -- Manifested in subordinate purposes and executive doings. -- Relation of one to the other -- 2. Justice is a disposition to render to every one his due. -- What is it to Tender to every one his due? -- Difference between what is due and what is "his due." -- Executive acts divided into two classes, and each of these subdivided Into two. -- The cases arising under these classes considered in order. -- What is "his due" arises from a special relation, and involves a right. -- Inalienable rights. -- What is a right? -- Right involves obligation.

THERE is perhaps no one of the particular moral attributes of the Deity of which accurate views are more. important, in both natural and revealed theology, than his attribute of justice. What is justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor? The inquiry is intimately connected with the discussion of many theological questions, as well as of the nature of a perfect moral government.

The word justice has, as we commonly, say, a variety of meanings in different applications. It is often applied to mere executive acts or doings, as these occur in the various forms of intercourse and business among men. It has however another important application, and one with which we are now more directly concerned, viz., that in which it denotes a virtuous or morally right state of mind. The general import of the word, in this use of it, I propose to ascertain before I enter on the investigation of the present leading inquiry -- what is justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor?

I proceed then to say, that

Justice, in respect to sentient beings, is a benevolent disposition or

purpose of mind to render to every one his due; more particularly -- justice is a benevolent disposition or purpose of mind to render or to do to every one what ought to be rendered or done, the obligation to which arises from some peculiar relation of the object of the act, which creates and implies a right reciprocal to such obligation.

In defining a general complex term, like the term justice, it is convenient to employ such general terms in a leading definition as shall be more obvious and familiar, though for certain purposes they may need themselves to be defined. In this way, by a progressive analysis, we may successfully unfold the elementary ideas comprised in the complex idea. Accordingly I now propose to show the correctness of the above definition of justice, in both its general and particular forms, by a progressive analysis and explanation.

The definition of justice by the civil law is this: *Justitia est constans et perpetua; voluntas jus suum cuique tribuendi.*" This as a definition in moral philosophy, whatever may be true of it in political philosophy or civil jurisprudence, is defective in omitting the elementary idea denoted by the word benevolent employed in the definition. This elementary idea is obviously essential to the true conception of justice as a morally right act or state of the will. Nor is this definition as one in political science, or as a definition of justice on the part of men considered as simply members of the body politic, an adequate definition, since in this relation, justice on the part of both ruler and subject must include benevolence toward the body politic, or a disposition to promote the welfare of the State. Again: in this definition of the civil law, the phrase *suum jus* must denote, not his right, as distinguished from that to which he has a right, but the latter only. Even in this sense of the phrases the definition does not by any means include every instance of justice. The will or purpose to punish a criminal, in certain cases, is an act of justice. But it is plainly not a will to render to the criminal his right, or that to which he has a right. It is only by understanding *suum jus* to mean his due, in the specific sense of this English phrase, as used and explained in the foregoing definitions of justice, that the definition of the civil law, in this respect, is unobjectionable. But more on this topic hereafter.

Premising then, that I speak of justice only in its general meaning, when used to denote a virtuous or morally right state of mind, I remark --

In the first place, that justice is a benevolent disposition or purpose. Here it is important to advert to the difference between benevolence, considered as that primary moral affection which is the sum and essence of all virtue, and that which may be called benevolence, although viewed abstractly from the former, it is not virtuous. Benevolence then, as the primary morally right affection, is an elective preference of the highest happiness of all -- the sentient universe -- to every conflicting object. In this sense of the word, benevolence is to be distinguished from other and very different states of mind, which are often and properly called benevolence, viz., from any merely constitutional affection, which includes no act of will; and also from any affection which, though voluntary, directly respects only some limited degree of good to others, and which may be prompted either by benevolence or selfishness. This general or universal benevolence -- benevolence as an elective preference of the highest happiness of sentient beings -- must then be distinguished from all those limited forms of kindness or good-will with which it is so often confounded by philosophers. Benevolence which respects merely one's country, or one's circle of friends and acquaintance, or an associate company of highwaymen, is not a virtuous or morally right state of the mind. Such benevolence is prompted by selfishness, and is of course a selfish affection.

Again: general or universal benevolence -- benevolence as merely an elective preference of the highest happiness of all must be distinguished from all subordinate action, in the form of volitions, dispositions, or Purposes, and in the form of executive doings, to which it may lead. This state of mind, as first arising in the mind, and as a mere moral preference (Ps. lxxiii. 25), may be conceived as a mental state in which the mind has no reference to any specific or subordinate action whatever. But if we suppose, which seems to be uniformly true, that the mind in making this preference, knows that the attainment of its object depends on subsequent subordinate action, then this state will be something more than the mere elective preference of the object specified. It will involve

another act of will, viz., a purpose or a disposition of mind to perform all such subordinate action as may be known to be necessary to attain the object. It is this complex mental state as including the elective preference of the highest happiness of all, and a purpose or disposition to perform all such action as may be necessary to attain its object, which is properly called benevolence, or general benevolence, universal benevolence or good will. By President Edwards it is called the love of being in general. Though this state of mind is one in which no particular subordinate action is directly willed or chosen, nor properly included, it is in a most important respect a practical principle, inasmuch as it is not only a disposition or purpose of heart, but a permanent governing principle, which in its true nature and tendency prompts to, or, etymologically speaking, arranges, or directs all those subordinate volitions, dispositions, or affections, and those executive doings, which are necessary to the attainment of its object. This state of mind is morally right, and the only act which, viewing other acts as not including it, is morally right. Being in an important sense a. permanent state of mind, whose tendency is to prompt to other mental states, it is combined with them, and the various combinations are properly called benevolent affections, dispositions, and purposes. These are the particular forms or modifications of general benevolence, or universal good-will. Each of these, for the sake of distinguishing it from others of the same class, and from general benevolence, we distinguish by a particular name. One of these particular forms of general benevolence in which the mind wills a limited degree of the well-being of another we often call benevolence, relying on the connection to show the meaning of the word. In this case there is a particular disposition or purpose to perform beneficent action prompted by general benevolence, which particular disposition or purpose, though properly called benevolence or kindness, differs from general benevolence. In another case there is a like disposition or purpose to speak the truth, which is properly called veracity. In another, there is a like disposition or purpose to render to every one his due, which is properly called justice. Any one of these particular forms of general benevolence, contemplated as including this principle, is truly and properly said to be morally right, and is properly called a virtue. But then its moral rectitude consists exclusively in the element of general benevolence, since if we conceive the particular disposition, affection, or purpose to exist, as it may, without this element of general benevolence, we necessarily conceive of it as a form of selfishness. If again we conceive of the element of general benevolence

as existing in the same degree without the particular disposition, affection, or purpose, we necessarily conceive of the same degree of moral rectitude. In like manner, when benevolence is conceived as combined with any particular disposition, &c., and these as going forth in executive action, we properly speak of the entire combination as morally right action.

When however we contemplate justice or veracity, or any particular disposition, purpose, volition, separately from, or as not including either the benevolent or selfish principle of the heart, it is neither morally right nor morally wrong. At the same time it must be admitted that justice, veracity -- , &c., each being conceived as a particular subordinate purpose or disposition without general benevolence, and including its appropriate executive action, are in some sense right, but not morally right. They are right as they are fitted to promote some limited good necessary to the general good. It may be truly said of any of these particular acts, that it ought to be done. But its rightness or oughtness is not moral rightness or moral oughtness, for this is a predicate only of (general) benevolence, or that which includes it. The rightness or oughtness of any particular subordinate disposition or purpose and its executive action, without including benevolence or selfishness, is the same kind of rightness or oughtness in relation to the end of action which is predicable of the structure of a watch or a pen in relation to the end for which it is made that is, a mere natural fitness. The particular virtues of justice, veracity, &c., differ from benevolence considered as the governing principle of the heart, not as excluding it, for as virtues they necessarily include it; but as including something more, viz., particular subordinate dispositions, purposes, to perform the particular actions which are necessary to the production of the general good. Benevolence, as the term is employed in this connection, is a governing, practical principle -- a controlling disposition or purpose to secure the highest well-being of all by all those subordinate particular affections, &c., and executive doings which are necessary to accomplish this end, while each particular virtue of this class consists in the benevolence which prompts the particular affection, purpose, &c., and in the particular affection, purpose, &c., which is prompted by it. In accordance with this classification, it is now maintained that justice, when the word is applied

to denote a virtue -- a morally right state of mind, in the general import of the word, is benevolence, in the form of a disposition or purpose; or it is purposing with benevolence or it is a benevolent purpose or disposition -- to render every one his due.

In the second place, I now propose to explain and confirm the other part of the general definition given of the word justice.

The inquiry here is, what is it to render to every one his due? I answer, it is to render to every one, what ought to be rendered to him, the obligation to which arises from some peculiar relation of the object of the act, which results in some right reciprocal to such obligation.

In further explanation I remark, that an act of rendering to another his due, is executive action, and that when we speak of such an act as an act of justice, we speak of it as dictated by a benevolent disposition or purpose. Again: an act of justice may respect as its object an individual or the public; and by the object of the act, I mean not one who is the object of the act merely as an act, but one to whom it is an act of justice, whether an individual or the public, in respect to whom it is an act of justice; even including one's self, as we do, in speaking of one as doing what justice to himself requires, thus making him both the agent and object of his act. Again: the obligation to render to another his due, arises from some peculiar relation of him who is bound to perform the act. This implies a peculiar relation on the part of him to whom the thing to be rendered is due, as the ground of the obligation to render it. The relation of the debtor, which is the ground of his obligation, implies a relation of the creditor, which is also a ground of the same obligation. The latter relation is so plainly implied in the former, as equally the ground of the obligation in all cases under consideration, that I have chosen not to burden the definition with its specification.

Further: we now inquire concerning the phrase his due, when it is said that justice is a benevolent purpose to render to every one his due. It will

be readily admitted that whatever justice dictates and demands should be rendered to another, is his due. It is then important in the present investigation, to ascertain if possible the precise import of the phrase his due. Some moralists suppose that to render to another what ought to be rendered, or to do to another what ought to be done, or to render or to do to another what is due, is the same thing as to render to another his due, or what is due to him. The error it is believed will be obvious, if we accurately determine the meaning of these different forms of expression. That to render to another what ought to be rendered, or to do to another what ought to be done, is to render or do to him what is due; and that to render or to do to another what is due, is to render or do to him what ought to be done, is undeniable. It is equally so, that to render or to do to another what ought to be rendered or done, or what is due, is in many cases to render to him his due. But that to render or to do to another what ought to be rendered or done, or what is due, is in all cases to render what is his due, cannot be pretended. How often the act of conferring a favor on a neighbor, or a friend, or a stranger, ought to be done, and is due, e. g., in relinquishing a debt, or forgiving an injury, when the favor conferred can with no propriety be said to be his due. This part of the Subject claims a more particular consideration.

I remark then, that there is an obvious difference between rendering to another what is due, and rendering to another what is his due. This difference may be presented in a classification of executive acts, which will show that in rendering to another what is his due, is only one species of those acts which are properly called rendering to another what is due.

Acts or doings then, which generally speaking constitute rendering to another WHAT IS DUE, are those which ought to be done as jetted and necessary to the highest good of the whole. It is obvious that by another is meant one or many, as the case may be.

This general class of executive acts may be divided into the two following classes or kinds, viz.:

I. Those which ought to be done as fitted and necessary to the highest good of the whole, and also of an individual.

II. Those which ought to be done as fitted and necessary to the highest good of the whole, though fitted not to promote but to impair or destroy the good of the individual.

These two classes of executive action may each be subdivided.

I. The first class may be divided into the two following classes:

(1.) Those which ought to be done as fitted and necessary to the highest good of the whole, and also of an individual, considered merely as sentient beings, and therefore not on account of any peculiar relation on the part of the objects of the act. Examples of this particular class are acts of forgiving. an injury, showing kindness to an enemy, remitting a debt, acts of hospitality and generosity, with other forms of beneficent action.

(2.) Those which ought to be done as fitted and necessary to the highest good of the whole, and that of an individual, considered not merely as sentient beings, but on account also of some peculiar relation of one or both of the objects of the act -- the public and the individual -- which gives rise to the obligation of such action. Examples are acts of protection, care, and kindness to children, fulfilling contracts and promises, paying the laborer his hire, rendering an equivalent for what is received, rewarding an obedient subject of law, &c.

II. The second class may be divided into the two following classes:

(1.) Those which ought to be done as fitted and necessary to the highest good of the whole considered merely as sentient beings, though fitted not to promote but to impair or destroy the good of the individual who is an object of the act, when no peculiar relation on his part gives rise to the

obligation of such action. Examples are acts of imposing taxes, pulling down one's house to stop the progress of a fire in a city, compelling men to fight the battles of their country, &c.

(2.) Those which ought to be done solely as fitted to the highest good of the whole considered not merely as sentient beings, and though such action is fitted not to promote but to impair or destroy the good of the individual, when some peculiar relation on his part and on the part of the public gives rise to the obligation of the act. Examples are acts of inflicting punishments or penal sanctions of law.

This classification is sufficient to show, that every act of rendering to one what ought to be rendered, is rendering what is due, but not what can be properly called rendering to one his due. It is true that between rendering to one what ought to be rendered or what is due, and rendering to one what is his due, there is an important resemblance. Both are acts of rendering to one what is due. But every act of rendering to one what is due, is not an act of rendering to one his due. Both are acts which ought to be done -- acts of obligation, and of obligation which rests ultimately on one common basis, the fitness and necessity of action to the general good. But between these kinds of action there is an important difference. The fitness and necessity of the two kinds of action to the general good depend on very different relations, which determine such fitness and necessity, and so determine the obligation in respect to the different kinds of action. This will appear if we consider the subordinate classes or kinds of executive action above specified.

Let us consider those which ought to be done, as fitted and necessary to the highest good of the whole and that of an individual, when viewed as sustaining the relation of sentient beings. Take the act of forgiving one who has injured us. While it is admitted that the obligation to such action arises from the relation of the objects of the act as sentient beings, it is plain that it arises in no degree or respect from any peculiar relation of either. It will not be pretended that it depends on any peculiar relation of the public. Nor does this obligation depend on any peculiar relation of the

offender; that is, on what he is or has done as an offender. The supposed act of kindness ought to be done, or would be due, had he not offended. The obligation is simply not taken away, and therefore is in no respect created or increased by the offense. For these reasons it is plain that the act cannot be properly said, in respect to the offender, to be his due, nor in respect to the public, to be their due; in other words, to be an act of justice either to him or to them.

Let us now recur to that class of cases, in which the obligation to action arises from the fitness and necessity of the action to the good of the public and the good of the individual, considered not merely as sentient beings, but as sustaining some peculiar relation. We see at once by referring to the examples, that the obligation to any one of these acts arises out of and is determined by the peculiar relations of the objects of the act. Every one sees that a peculiar relation exists between the laborer and his employer, which is the ground of the obligation of the latter to pay the hire of the former; and another peculiar relation between the public and the employer, by which the latter comes under obligation to the public to the same act. Similar remarks apply to the act of fulfilling a contract, and to the act of obedience to law. In the latter case, the lawgiver or government, as a guardian of the public good, is brought by the act of the obedient subject under a peculiar obligation to him, and also to the public. Thus the act of rewarding the obedient subject of law is rendering to him what is his due, and to the public what is their due. The same is true of the acts of paying the laborer and fulfilling a contract. It is rendering his due to the individual who is the object of the act, and it is also rendering to the public their due. As such, the act in each instance is properly called an act of justice to the individual who is its object, and an act of justice to the public.

Let us now recur to that class of acts which ought to be done solely as fitted and necessary to the highest good of the whole, though they impair or destroy the good of the individual who is the object of such action.

In respect to an act which falls under the first subdivision of this class, we

see at once that the obligation depends on no peculiar relation of the individual who is the object of the act. For example, the obligation to pull down one's house to stop the progress of a fire in a city, while it results from the fitness and necessity of the act to the highest good of the whole, depends on no peculiar relation of the owner of the house, since the obligation would be the same were the house without an owner. Hence while this act is rendering to another what is due, and to the public what is their due, it cannot be properly said to be rendering to the individual what is his due.

Again: in respect to an act which falls under the other subdivision of this class, the obligation arises from a peculiar relation of the individual who is the object of the act, by which the act becomes fitted and necessary to the highest, good of the whole; and from a consequent peculiar relation of him on whom the obligation rests. For example, the obligation of a lawgiver or moral governor to punish the disobedient subject of law arises not at all from his relation as a sentient being, since this would imply an obligation to inflict suffering for its own sake; but it arises from his peculiar relation as a transgressor of law, and the peculiar relation of a lawgiver or moral governor to the public, which render the act of punishing the transgressor necessary to the highest good of the whole. Hence this act is not only rendering to another what is due, but what is his due, and what in respect to the public is their due.

Again, as I have already said, while the obligation to render to another his due, or the obligation of an act of justice, arises from some peculiar relation of the object of the act, this peculiar relation results in and implies some right reciprocal to this obligation. This right however does not always vest in him who sustains the relation which is the ground of the obligation. As the act of justice can never respect merely an individual as its object, but must respect either the public only or both an individual and the public, so the right which is reciprocal to the obligation of the act can never vest merely in an individual, though in some cases it may vest merely in the public, and in others there may be a right to the act on the part of an individual, and also a right to the act on the part of the public. This right can never vest merely in an individual, that is, no one as an

individual merely, can possess a right which does not imply a right to the same thing on the part of the public. Such rights of individuals seem to have been claimed by some under the denomination of "inalienable rights," e. g., the right to life, to liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness. Without here affirming what can scarcely be questioned, that the rights here specified, or at least some of them, would become in some circumstances inconsistent with the highest good of the whole and therefore could not exist, one thing is plain, that if they exist at all, they must exist on the ground that they are consistent with and required by the greatest good of the whole. The public therefore must possess the right to secure, as far as may be, the individual in the possession of the blessings which his rights respect, for the possession of these blessings by him is as necessary to the highest good of the whole to which the public has a right as it is to the good of the individual. I said that in some cases a right may vest only in the public. The right to pull down a house by the police of the city, to arrest the progress of a fire, vests not in the owner of the house, but only in the public or in the police as representatives of the public. The peculiar relation of the public, which is the ground of the obligation of the act, and which results in the reciprocal right of the public, is the relation of the greatest number whose highest good depends on and requires the act. The act of a moral governor in rewarding an obedient subject of law is an act of justice both to the subject and to the public. In this case there is a twofold obligation and a twofold corresponding right: there is an obligation to the obedient subject with a corresponding right on his part as an individual, and there is an obligation to the public with a corresponding right on their part. The peculiar relation of the obedient subject considered as an individual, which is the ground of the obligation to reward him, and which results in his corresponding right to a reward, is the relation of one whose highest good by his obedience is rendered necessary to the highest good of the whole; and the peculiar relation of the public which is the ground of the obligation to reward the obedient subject, and which results in the corresponding right of the public that he be rewarded, is the relation of the greatest number whose highest good depends on the act. The act of punishing the disobedient subject of law is an act of justice both to the subject himself and to the public. In this case the obligation is not an obligation to him, but to the public only. The right which corresponds to the obligation to punish him does not vest in him, as the right to a reward vests in an obedient subject. A right always respects some good; or in the

language of Burke, "men have no right to what is not for their benefit." As punishment then, or a legal penalty, is only an evil to the subject, the right which corresponds to the obligation to punish him, does not vest in him but in the public only, whose benefit only it respects. The obligation to punish him arises indeed from his peculiar relation, as a disobedient subject, and on this account the act of punishing him is an act of justice to him. It is an act, the obligation to which is created by his disobedience, but it is not an obligation to him, nor does it imply a right on his part corresponding to the obligation. The legal penalty is not inflicted on the transgressor as a personal benefit to him or as the means of good to him; and since every obligation of one to another respects the good of the latter, it follows, that although in the present case there is an obligation on the part of the moral governor to punish the transgressor; although this obligation in one respect arises from the peculiar relation of the transgressor; although he deserves punishment; although punishment is his due; although the act of punishment is an act of justice to him as well as to the public; yet the obligation to punish him is in no sense an obligation to him. To him punishment is only an evil; and as no one can be said to have a right to an evil merely for evil's sake, so no one can be properly said to be under obligation to another to inflict evil upon him merely for evil's sake. Legal penalty is inflicted on the transgressor as the necessary means of sustaining the authority of law or of the lawgiver, and so as the necessary means of the general good. The transgressor by his act of transgression creates on the part of the lawgiver an obligation to punish him, and also a corresponding right to his punishment on the part of the public. Hence punishment is his due, or an act of justice to him, inasmuch as he has brought the moral governor under an obligation to punish him, not to himself, but to the public; by creating a right not on his own part to be punished, but a right on the part of the public to his punishment, which corresponds to the obligation to punish him. The peculiar relation of the transgressor, which is the ground of the moral governor's obligation to punish him, and of the right to his punishment on the part of the public, is the relation of one, who by his transgression has made his punishment necessary to the public good. Thus it appears that the obligation to an act of justice always implies a correspondent right somewhere, either in an individual and in the public, or at least in the public, and that the obligation of the act, and the consequent right to its performance depend on some peculiar relation of the object of the act.

But what is a right? The answer to this question will serve still further to explain and establish the present definition of justice. I proceed to say then --

In the third place, that the word right, in its most general import, when we speak of one as having a right, denotes the fitness to the general good which arises from some peculiar relation of the possessor of the right that some good to him which the right respects as its object should be, which also creates or implies a corresponding obligation.

After some explanation of terms which I deem important, I shall attempt to show the correctness of the above definition of a right.

A right may be that of an individual, as the right of a ruler, a subject, a parent, a child, a creditor, &c.; or it may be the right of the public, a community, a state or kingdom. As a matter of convenience in the use of language, we may conceive of the public or a community as a moral person. I shall so use the words one and another that they may be applied either to the public, to a community, or to an individual, as the case may require.

Again: a right always respects some good to its possessor as its object; that is, happiness, or the means of happiness, or both. It may be a right to be or a right to do, in the broadest sense of the word -- as a right to act or to forbear acting, a right to possess or to relinquish, to think, to judge, to will, to execute one's will or to have it executed by another, to confer good or to inflict evil, &c., &c.

Further: when I speak of the thing which a right respects, or the object of a right as that which should be, the propriety of the language in certain cases may not be obvious. For example, we say that one has a right to

an estate, but who would say that the estate ought to be. We have however only to remember, that in this case, as in many similar cases, the popular form of expression is elliptical, and that the meaning fully expressed would be, one has the right to the possession and use of an estate. The propriety of saying that one's possession and use of an estate is that which should be, is at once apparent. At the same time this form of expression, or some equivalent form, is the only one which is applicable to all cases. For example, the public has a right to the punishment of a criminal as truly as one has a right to an estate, or as an obedient subject has a right to a reward. But while we may properly say in respect to the object of the right in the former case -- and so in respect to the object of every right -- that it should be, we cannot properly say of this object that it should be possessed by the person holding the right, as we may properly say this in respect to many other objects of a right.

Again: when I speak of the fitness to the general good, &c., that the object of the right should be, I do not mean to imply that a right or every right is inalienable, nor that it may not be relinquished in a change of circumstances, or on the ground of that which is an equivalent to the object of the right. The contrary is undeniable. One may alienate his right to property on the ground of an equivalent in money, or in the happiness which he finds in imparting good to others. A moral governor may abandon his right to punish a transgressor, and the public may abandon their right that he be punished, on the ground of an atonement, which is an equivalent in respect to the end of punishment; provided that the abandonment does not involve in any respect the sacrifice of public good. But no one can voluntarily alienate or relinquish a right, consistently with the principles of moral rectitude, knowing that the alienation or relinquishment involves a sacrifice of the general happiness.

Further: we often speak of one as having a right of which he is deprived, or of his not having, or of being deprived of his right. The incongruity of the language does not however obscure our meaning. We mean that he has a right, or that a right is his so far forth as having it or its being his is determined by that relation on his part which is the ground of a right, while he has not the actual possession or use of the object of the right.

Thus in one sense one may be said to have a right, which in another sense he may be said not to have, or to be deprived of, and the possession of which he may have occasion to seek by force or by a legal process.

Once more: in common language we speak of one as having or possessing a right, or of one's right, or of a right as being another's -- being his or your or my right, and the question may naturally arise when it is said that a right is the fitness to the general good, which arises, &c. -- with what propriety or truth can this fitness, when called a right, be said to belong to one or to be his? I answer, that nothing is more common than to say that a thing belongs to one or is his, or to use other forms of expression, to describe him as its possessor when it pertains to him as inseparable from what he is or has done, or results from any relation which he sustains. In this manner we speak of one's obligation or of one's necessity, meaning an obligation or a necessity which exists in respect to him as inseparable from his circumstances, or results from some relation on his part. In the following passage from Shakespeare we have this use of the word:

"Were it my fatness,
To let these hands obey my blood,
They are apt enough to dislocate and tear
Thy flesh and bones." -- King Lear.

This is obviously equivalent to saying -- were it in respect to the true end of action (which is no other than the general good), fit or proper in my case, or in view of what I am. or the relation I sustain, "to let these hands," &c. The fitness here spoken of, whether it be that which constitutes a right or not, is the fitness which arises from the relation which one sustains, and on this ground is spoken of as his. The fitness in such a case is the fitness that an agent should act in a given manner, and the fitness which constitutes a right is the fitness that one should be the

object of an action on the part of another as already described. Indeed, should one affirm in analytic language that there is a fitness to the general good arising from the peculiar relation of the laborer, that his hire should not be withheld by his employer, and this creates a reciprocal obligation on the part of the latter, what would it be but to say that the laborer has a right to his hire?

With these things in view, I will now attempt to show that the particular or elementary ideas specified in the above definition constitute the complex idea of a right.

I remark then, that we cannot form the common and familiar idea of a right without the idea of the fitness to the general good, that the particular object of the right should be. This will be obvious from reflecting on any familiar instance of a right. We say one has a right to life, that is, to have or possess life; and so in respect to liberty, property, &c., &c. But who can conceive of the existence of the right without conceiving of the fitness to the general good, that the particular good which is the object of the right should be? If we conceive the particular good, which is the object of the right, not to be fitted to the general good, we necessarily conceive it to be inconsistent with the general good, and of course that the individual has, and can have no right to the particular good. The moment we conceive of one as having a right to any particular good, we necessarily conceive that the being of that thing is right -- that it is right that it should be -- that it is what in the case ought to be and should not be prevented by any other. But it is plainly impossible thus to conceive of it without conceiving it to be fitted to the general good; or which is the same thing, if we conceive it to be inconsistent with the general good. What possible right can one be conceived to possess to life, or liberty, or property, when his possession of the particular good is inconsistent with the general good? Or to take an example of a right of the public. What possible right has the public to the punishment of the criminal, except his punishment is fitted to promote and of course not inconsistent with the public good? Punishment is in no respect a good to the criminal himself, and if we suppose it to be in no respect a good to the public, or the means of the public good, what possible right can exist on the part of the moral governor to inflict it, or on

the part of the public that it should be inflicted? Such a right would be a right to inflict evil merely for evil's sake. The act of infliction could in no respect be good to him who should inflict the evil, or to him on whom it should be inflicted, or to the public. There could be no motive to the act, and the act itself would be impossible in the nature of things. Or if we suppose the act to be possible, still it can be supposed to be possible only to unqualified malice; while the right to perform the act or the right that it should be performed, would imply that the act would be morally right. And if it be morally right to inflict evil merely for evil's sake -- to act with unqualified malice -- then I ask, what is it to act morally wrong? It is then plainly impossible to form the universal and familiar idea of a right without the idea of the fitness to the general good that the object of the right should be.

Again: in conceiving of a right, we necessarily conceive of the fitness of the particular good which is the object of the right, to the general good, as resulting from some peculiar relation of the possessor of the right. This may be seen in a few examples. The fitness to the general good of one's paying a debt, the payment of which is the object of a right on the part of the creditor, results from the peculiar relation of the creditor -- the relation of one who has imparted a good to another, on condition of receiving an equivalent. The fitness to the general good that a moral governor should reward the obedient subject, so far as the right to a reward on the part of the latter is concerned, results from his peculiar relation -- the relation of one who, by his obedience, has rendered his reward necessary to the general good; while this fitness, so far as the rewarding him is the object of a right on the part of the public, results from the peculiar relation of the public -- the relation of the greatest number to the highest well-being as depending on the act. The fitness to the general good of punishing the disobedient subject under a merely legal system, the punishing of whom is the object of a right, not on his part, but on the part of the public, results from the relation of the public -- the relation of the greatest number to the highest well-being so far as it depends on the act. Thus in conceiving of a right, whether it be that of an individual or of the public, we necessarily conceive of some peculiar relation of the possessor of the right, from which results the fitness to the general good of that which is the object of the right.

The same thing may be shown by familiar cases, in which no right can be conceived to exist, because the peculiar relation, which is one necessary ground of a right, does not exist. There are many cases in which there is a fitness to the general good, that one should act in a given manner toward another, but in which the latter has no right that the act should be done. There is a fitness to the general good, that one injured by another should forgive the offender -- that one's house should be pulled down to arrest the progress of a fire, &c., &c. But it is impossible to conceive that the offender has a right to forgiveness, or the owner of the house a right that his house should be pulled down. And one reason is, that it is impossible to conceive of any peculiar relation on the part of either from which the fitness of the supposed act arises. The relation of each is indeed such, that the supposed act done to him will subserve the general good. But the fitness of the act to this end does not arise from his peculiar relation, as the ground or reason of it. Kindness toward an offender is fitted to the general good, and would be so were he not an offender. It is so, notwithstanding his offense, and therefore does not become so by his offense. The ownership of the house does not occasion the fitness of pulling it down, to the general good. Neither the offender nor the owner of the house can appeal to any peculiar relation on his part as the ground or reason of the fitness of the supposed act in respect to him, to the general good, nor as a reason that it should be done. The one cannot say, I have injured another, and therefore I have a right to kindness from him; nor can the other say, I own the house, and therefore have a right that it be pulled down. These examples are sufficient to show that we cannot conceive of a right without conceiving of the fitness of the object of the right to the general good, as arising from some peculiar relation of the possessor of the right.

Nor is this all. We cannot conceive of a right without conceiving of that peculiar relation of its possessor of which I have spoken, as creating and implying a reciprocal obligation on the part of another. By this reciprocal obligation I mean an obligation which corresponds to the right in its foundation and its object. Thus there is an obligation to the laborer on the part of his employer to pay him his hire, and, a right on the part of the laborer to the payment, and both this obligation and this right are founded

in the peculiar relation of the possessor of the right. What the obligor is under obligation to do or to avoid doing, the obligee has a right that he should do or avoid doing, and this obligation and this right arise from one and the same relation on the part of the possessor of the right and respect the same object: so that the obligation and the right are reciprocal; that is, they correspond in their foundation and their object. I say then, that we cannot conceive of a right without conceiving of the peculiar relation of its possessor as creating and implying an obligation to him in respect to the object of the right. As the laborer has a right to his hire, that is, to the payment of his hire by his employer, there is a correspondent obligation to pay it on the part of the latter. As the laborer has a right that none should prevent the payment of his hire, others are under a corresponding obligation not to prevent it. The same things are obviously true in respect to every other right.

The same thing is further obvious from the nature of obligation. Obligation is the necessity one is under, or the being bound by a necessity to do (either by acting or forbearing to act) that which is fitted to the great end of all action, the general good. As then there is a fitness to this end that the object of one's right should be, arising from some peculiar relation on his part, so from this fitness and therefore from this peculiar relation arises a necessity, i.e., an obligation on the part of another, even of every other, to act so that the object of the right shall be. Right and obligation are therefore reciprocal. If there is a right on the part of one, there is a corresponding obligation on the part of another. An essential idea or conception of a right is the idea of it, as that which in the manner explained creates and implies a reciprocal obligation.

It is this characteristic which constitutes the difference, or as logicians say the differentia, between a case of fitness to the general good on the part of one that a particular good to him should be, which is a right, and that which is not a right. There are, as we have seen, many instances of fitness to the general good which imply an obligation to confer good on others, or not to prevent or hinder the existence of such good, but which are not cases involving corresponding rights. But wherever we find a case of fitness to the general good arising from some peculiar relation of

one that a particular good to him should be or should exist, which peculiar relation on his part creates and implies a consequent obligation on the part of another to secure or not to prevent the existence of that particular good, there we find a right. That the particular good, which is the object of the right should be, is emphatically and in a peculiar sense right in respect to the possessor of the right. It involves a rightness, i.e., a fitness to the general good, not merely as such fitness exists in many other cases, irrespective of any peculiar relation on the part of him to whom the particular good is a good, but a fitness to the general good, which arises from some peculiar relation on his part, appropriating it to him and creating an obligation to him on another or on all others to secure or not to prevent the existence of that particular good. This fitness is thus with great propriety appropriated to him from whose peculiar relation it results, and on this account is called his right, while as creating in the manner explained a corresponding obligation, it is par excellence called a right.

Having thus attempted to specify the several elementary ideas which constitute the complex idea of what we call a right, the question naturally arises whether any other element is essential to the complex conception. On this point I can only say that I am unable to discover any other, or at least any other which is not fairly included in the specification.

According to what has been said, justice, considered as a morally right state of mind, may be said, in general terms, to be a benevolent disposition or purpose to render to every other his due; or more particularly, justice is a benevolent disposition, or purpose to do to every other what ought to be done, the obligation to which arises from some peculiar relation of the object of the act which creates and implies a right reciprocal to such obligation.

That this definition of justice may be more fully apprehended I have defined by progressive analysis and explanation the leading terms used in the above forms of definition, and particularly the term right, and shown, if I mistake not, that a right is the fitness to the general good, which arises from some peculiar relation of its possessor, that its object should be, thus creating and implying a corresponding obligation.

With this import of the word justice in view, I next propose to consider some of the kinds or species of justice.

PART II. -- DIFFERENT SPECIES OF JUSTICE WITH APPLICATION TO THEOLOGICAL ERRORS.

Justice commonly classified as commutative, distributive, and general. -- This erroneous -- Theological errors founded upon it -- In opposition to these views three propositions vindicated, viz.: 1. Justice in a moral governor not general benevolence; 2. Not distributive justice; but, & A benevolent disposition to maintain authority. -- These propositions defended from a consideration of various instances of justice, and from the fact that It is not exposed to the theological errors specified.

THE leading inquiry before us is still, what is justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor? On this subject diversity of opinion has existed among theologians, and occasioned corresponding diversity of opinion on other topics of equal or greater moment. Differences of opinion on the subjects of atonement for sin, of justification before God, and of a future retribution, may be traced in many cases to different views of the justice of God as a moral ruler. To the theological student we can hardly present a theme more worthy of his attention, from its relations to other subjects which demand investigation.

Justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor is obviously a particular kind or species of justice. Hence writers on the subject, both philosophers and theologians, who have professed to give precise and accurate views of it, have often attempted to classify and thus to distinguish the different kinds of justice. These they have commonly comprised in three classes, viz.: commutative, distributive, and general justice.

By commutative justice they mean a disposition to fulfill contracts.

By distributive justice they mean a disposition to confer legal rewards and

inflict legal punishments, according to the personal character of the subjects of law.

By general justice they (erroneously) mean general benevolence, or a disposition to promote the highest happiness.

This classification I deem erroneous, inasmuch as it confounds general justice with general benevolence. It thus, as I claim, gives a false view of general justice, and wholly omits any precise and adequate view of justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor.

To present these errors in their true form, and to show the importance of correcting them and of ascertaining the exact truth, it is necessary to consider some of their theological applications.

Some prominent New England divines hold principles on this subject, which, in connection with other views also maintained by them, have been supposed to lead by direct inference to the doctrine of universal salvation. Though these divines reject this inference with abhorrence, I cannot doubt that it is fully authorized by certain premises which they furnish. Thus while they have maintained that general justice is the same thing as general benevolence, they have also maintained that the atonement is made for all men, and renders it consistent with general justice -- that is, according to their definition, with general benevolence -- to pardon and to save all. The proposition is unqualified, that the pardon and salvation of all are consistent with general benevolence. From these premises it follows that God will actually pardon and save all men. It would be to no purpose to say that the atonement has rendered it consistent with general benevolence to pardon and save all on condition of repentance. This is to modify, and thus to change the proposition controverted. Besides, these divines maintain that God can bring all men to repentance. If then the atonement has rendered it consistent with general benevolence in all respects to pardon and save all, it has rendered it consistent with general benevolence to bring all to

repentance. Of course as God can, he will bring all men to repentance, and all will be pardoned and saved.

I need not say that the premises thus furnished by the New England divines are adopted by at least one class of Universalists, as a sufficient basis for their peculiar doctrine.

Another large class of divines however, who charge on their New England brethren the doctrine of universal salvation as a legitimate consequence of their views of the justice of God and of the atonement of Christ, and who agree with them and with Universalists in maintaining that God can bring all men to repentance, not only deny a universal atonement, but also that view of justice in God as a moral governor which the New England divines have maintained.

What then, in the view of this class of divines, is justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor? Perhaps it would be regarded by them as a just and satisfactory answer to say, that justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor is distributive justice as defined in the above classification. This definition however, of justice in the present application of the term, I regard as in a high degree objectionable, whether the language be understood in its proper import or according to the views of the divines referred to. In what I consider the proper meaning of the language, the definition presents only one specific meaning of the word justice instead of its general import; for as it may appear hereafter, a perfect moral governor may be as truly just when he forgives a transgressor through an atonement, as when executing legal sanctions according to the merit and demerit of his subjects. But this definition, as the language is explained by that class of divines to whom I have referred, is still more objectionable. They maintain that there is an inherent or intrinsic merit in obedience to law, and an inherent intrinsic demerit in disobedience to law, aside from and to the entire exclusion of any relation in either to the general good of the kingdom, or to the authority of the law or of the lawgiver, as this is the means of the general good -- that on account of this inherent merit of obedience and this

inherent demerit of disobedience, viewed in this restricted and narrow sense and irrespectively of any other relations, the moral governor is disposed to reward the one and punish the other -- and that this disposition is his attribute of justice. In explanation of these views they are careful to insist that it is right in itself to execute legal sanctions for the reasons assigned, even right in itself to inflict penal evil on a transgressor, though no good result would or could be accomplished by the infliction. In accordance with these views of merit and demerit, of desert and ill-desert or guilt, they form their peculiar views of atonement, imputation, and justification, maintaining the imputation of the sins of a believing transgressor to another as his surety or sponsor, and the imputation of the surety's righteousness to the transgressor, so that his demerit, ill-desert, or guilt is wholly removed from him and ceases to be his and becomes another's and so that he becomes as perfectly righteous as had he perfectly obeyed the law; and a just lawgiver does and must regard and treat him as being perfectly righteous, and thus justice requires that he be rewarded and forbids that he be punished. I need not say that these views of atonement, imputation, and justification, together with the view of justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor on which they are founded, are regarded by another large class of divines as highly erroneous.

I have thus specified supposed errors in the foregoing classification of the different kinds of justice, as the language is defined and explained by different classes of theologians, and some of the more serious errors in theology which result from them. I have done this that we may better appreciate the importance of these errors of classification, and of ascertaining with precision the nature of that attribute which we call justice in a perfect moral governor. In opposition to the errors of the foregoing classification I now propose to show. That justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor, and which is properly called general justice, is not the same thing as general benevolence.

2. That justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor is not distributive justice, especially as defined by Borne theologians; and,

3. That, justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor, is a

benevolent disposition to maintain his authority as the necessary means of the highest good of his kingdom.

1. Justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor, and which is properly called general justice, is not the same thing as general benevolence.

This is evident at once from the nature of both. So different is one from the other, according to our necessary conceptions and to every proper use of language, that nothing but those confused conceptions And that improper use of terms which result from the want of due reflection, could occasion the confounding things which are so different. This I claim to have shown abundantly in what I have already said for the purpose of unfolding the nature of general benevolence and the nature of justice. According to what has been said, general or universal benevolence is an elective preference of the highest happiness of the sentient universe to every object that can come into competition with it. As such a preference merely, it includes no disposition or purpose to other volitions, choices, dispositions, or purposes; and therefore it is not justice, or a disposition or purpose to render every one his due, nor a disposition or purpose to speak truth, nor any other specific disposition or purpose. Or if we include under general benevolence a disposition or purpose to all those subordinate specific dispositions or purposes which respect executive action, still it is not the same thing as any one of them. It is no more the same thing as a disposition to render to every one his due, than it is a disposition or purpose to speak truth, or than it is a disposition to relieve the suffering, or than it is a disposition or purpose to show favor to the guilty. In these particular subordinate purposes, the mind wills certain different kinds of executive action. But in the mere exercise of general or universal benevolence, it forms no such particular purposes. Of course, in the elective preference of the highest good of all, the purpose or disposition to render to every other his due, which is justice in the most generic import of the word, is not included, and therefore that particular kind of justice which is an attribute of a perfect moral governor cannot be included.

I proceed to say --

2. That justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor is not distributive justice, especially as defined by some theologians.

When we speak of justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor, the language means an attribute under this name, which is essential to and inseparable from the character of one who sustains this high relation. But distributive justice, that is, a disposition or will to confer legal rewards and to inflict legal punishments according to the personal character of subjects, is not in the proper meaning of the language essential to the character of a perfect moral governor. In one respect indeed, viz., as a disposition or will to confer rewards on obedient subjects, it is essential to his character. No being can sustain the character of a perfect moral ruler who is not disposed to confer and who does not actually confer the merited reward on every perfectly obedient subject. But a disposition to inflict merited punishment on disobedient subjects is plainly not essential in all cases, e. g., in a case of an adequate atonement to the character of a perfect moral governor. If so, his character for justice must be forfeited by every act of pardon, even under an adequate atonement for transgression. Distributive justice then, properly so called, is not the attribute which in all cases is essential to, and inseparable from the character of a perfect moral governor.

Nor is this true in respect to distributive justice, as it is defined by the class of theologians to whom I have already referred. According to this view, justice in the form of distributive justice requires that the legal penalty be inflicted on the transgressor, though no good can be produced and no evil be prevented by the infliction; and this on the ground, as it is called, of the intrinsic demerit of transgression. How entirely unwarranted this view of the subject is, has been perhaps already sufficiently shown. It has been shown that justice always implies a correspondent right somewhere to some good or benefit which is the object of the right. What sort of justice would that be which proposed to accomplish no good to any one? And what sort of a right would that be which had no good or

benefit for its object on the part of the possessor of the right? It has also been shown that the right to some good or benefit which corresponds to an act of justice, must either vest in both an individual and in the public, or at least in the public; that as punishment is in no respect a good to the transgressor, it can in no respect be the object of a right on his part, and therefore cannot in this respect be an act of justice to him nor an act of justice to him in any sense, except that he by his act of transgression has created a right to his punishment on the part of the public; that if we suppose it to be in no respect a good to the public, it can in no respect be the object of a right on their part, and therefore cannot be the object of any right whatsoever. It cannot therefore in such a case be an act of justice in any sense whatsoever. It was further shown that such an act would be inflicting evil merely for evil's sake, which is physically impossible on the part of a voluntary and moral being, and is even beyond the capacity of infernal malice. Such a representation of justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor is in the last degree preposterous.

Again: these divines would do well to ask what they mean by the intrinsic demerit of sin or transgression. Every one who reflects at all on this subject must know that the ideas denoted by the terms merit and demerit, whether applied to a being or his acts, are relative ideas. Hence what may be called the absolute nature of obedience, or of disobedience to law, aside from all relation to some being or thing, or rather to both, is neither good nor evil, deserving nor ill-deserving. That in transgression or sin, which we call its demerit, is not its nature considered as absolute, or positive, and so aside from, and exclusive of any relation to any thing else, but it is its absolute or positive nature conceived as related to something else. Particularly it is that relation of transgression to the penalty of law which renders its infliction on the transgressor, under a merely legal system, the fit and necessary means of upholding the authority of the lawgiver, and of thus securing the public good. Hence, if we separate this conception of the relation of sin or transgression from our conception of its nature, and so conceive of its nature as absolute, without being thus related to punishment, there can be nothing in our conception of that nature, which can be conceived to be or which can be called its demerit. It is to no purpose to say that, transgression or sin is

evil in itself, and therefore a fit object of the expression of abhorrence from a moral governor. There are only two possible senses in which sin or transgression, or any thing else, can be properly said to be evil in itself, viz., either as unhappiness or suffering is evil in itself, or as that which is the means or cause of unhappiness or suffering is evil in itself. But transgression cannot be truly said to be evil in itself in the first sense. If therefore it is not evil in itself, in the second sense, as now supposed, it is in no sense evil in itself. To talk therefore of the demerit of transgression as an evil in itself and exclusive of all relation to evil as its consequence, is to talk without ideas. Plainly, sin is an evil only as in its nature it is related to evil consequences. The annihilation of this relation would be the annihilation of all that which constitutes its evil nature; all that on account of which it deserves punishment, or which can be called its demerit. What kind of justice would that be which should inflict punishment for transgression, to which pertains no ill-desert or demerit, or which inflicts punishment when no good can be produced and no evil prevented by its infliction? Who will on due reflection ascribe this kind of justice to a perfect moral governor? I now propose to show --

3. That justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor is a benevolent disposition to maintain by the requisite means, his authority as the necessary condition of the highest good of his kingdom.

What has been said in our previous discussions concerning the relation of a perfect moral governor to his kingdom, is sufficient to show that as a perfectly benevolent being he must be benevolently disposed to maintain his authority, as the necessary means of the highest good of his kingdom. This benevolent disposition or particular form of benevolence is not only an essential condition of his right to reign, but to accomplish its end or object -- to maintain his authority by the various means which in the varying circumstances of individual subjects and of his kingdom may be demanded or dictated by perfect benevolence, is the grand, peculiar, sole function of his office. All that he does as a moral governor he does for the purpose of maintaining his authority, and all that depends on his relation as a moral governor, depends on the maintenance of his authority. This maintained, all his responsibilities as a moral governor are fulfilled. Otherwise he betrays his trust and forfeits his throne. Otherwise he defeats the end of his administration, and all that depends on his rightful

moral dominion is sacrificed and lost.

Now it is claimed that this benevolent disposition on the part of a moral governor to maintain his authority as the necessary means of the highest happiness of his kingdom, is what is truly and properly called his justice. Or thus, I maintain that in the generic import of the word, when applied to denote the attribute of a perfect moral governor,

Justice is a benevolent disposition on his part to maintain by the requisite means his authority as the necessary condition of the highest happiness of his kingdom.

This I shall attempt to show --

In the first place, from a comprehensive classification of the different kinds of justice.

I recur then to the summum genus, that is, to the most generic or general meaning of the word justice, as already defined, viz.

Justice is a benevolent disposition or purpose of mind to render or to do to every one what ought to be rendered or done to him, the obligation to which arises from some peculiar relation of the object of the act, that creates or implies a right corresponding to such obligation.

Assuming on the ground of proof already given, the correctness of this definition of justice in the most general import of the word, I proceed to say that justice may be divided into two kinds, viz.:

1. Justice as it pertains to the high relation, or is an attribute of a moral governor, which is general justice properly so called; and,
2. Justice as it pertains to moral beings in other relations than that of a moral governor.

This second kind of justice, it is obvious, includes very many kinds or forms of justice; so many, that to frame subdivisions which should include the whole and accurately distinguish them would be difficult, and on this account has not often been attempted. What has been called commutative justice is one prominent and very comprehensive subdivision under this kind of justice. It is manifest however, that in the most comprehensive import given to the language, it cannot with propriety be so extended as to include all the subordinate kinds which belong to this general class, e. g., so as to include the justice on the part of parents to afford care, protection, and support to children, &c. Without therefore attempting any further classification of this kind of justice than merely to say, that commutative justice is one prominent subordinate kind of it, I recur to the first of the two subordinate kinds above specified, viz.:

Justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor, which may be properly called general justice.

That what I have now defined justice to be, as an attribute of a perfect moral governor, is one kind or species of justice, is at once manifest by comparing its definition with that before given of justice in the most generic import of the word. Thus justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor, according to the present definition as given in somewhat general terms, may be defined thus, viz.: a benevolent disposition to do what ought to be done by a moral governor to his kingdom, in the specific form of maintaining by the requisite means, his authority as the necessary condition of the highest happiness of his kingdom, the obligation to which arises from the peculiar relation of his kingdom to him as depending on him thus to guard and secure its highest happiness, which relation implies a right on the part of his kingdom corresponding to such obligation on his part. That such a disposition on the part of a moral

governor is properly and truly called justice, I cannot suppose will be denied or doubted by any one who has ever reflected on the import of the word justice, in its present application. What less or what more can the word denote, according to usage? Should a moral governor refuse that protection and security to the highest happiness of his kingdom which he owes them, by upholding his authority as the ruler and guardian of all -- should he suffer all that can be called the authority of law, or government, or his own authority, to be utterly subverted -- should he thus utterly annihilate this peculiar and essential influence on the subjects of his dominion, what shadow of that which is called justice on his part could remain? What would such an act on his part be, and what would it or could it be called, but an act of the grossest injustice? On the other hand, what more is or can be necessary to the absolute perfection of this attribute on his part, than a perfectly benevolent disposition to uphold, and the actual upholding of his authority as the necessary means of the highest happiness of his kingdom? As a moral governor, he is not bound either to secure the obedience or to prevent the disobedience of his subjects; but simply and only to maintain his own authority as the requisite means Of securing as far as may be the one, and preventing the other. Whatever acts benevolence on his part may dictate in other relations -- whatever acts of kindness, or of commutative justice, or other kinds of justice it may dictate or demand, they can never conflict with or set aside his obligation to maintain his authority as a moral governor, nor abrogate the right of his kingdom, which corresponds to that obligation. To maintain his authority is the entire function of his office. Whatever else be supposed which is supposable in the case, the necessity is absolute and immutable, that as a perfect moral governor he maintain his authority. On this the highest happiness of his kingdom depends. To this every thing else supposable must yield. This can be yielded to nothing. Justice, then, as the attribute of a perfect moral governor, is nothing more and nothing less than a benevolent disposition on his part to maintain, by the requisite means, his authority as the necessary condition of the highest happiness of his kingdom.

Again: this will still further appear if we pursue our classification, as we may, into the particular kinds of justice as the attribute of a moral governor. Justice then as the attribute of a perfect moral governor is not

only one kind or species of justice; it also includes particular kinds of justice under itself.

(1.) Distributive justice; or justice as the attribute of a moral governor, which involves the particular disposition to maintain his authority by means of legal sanctions.

(2.) Atoning justice; or justice as the attribute of a moral governor, which involves the particular disposition to maintain In his authority by means of an atonement.

In both these cases it is evident that the generic import of the word justice, as the attribute of a perfect moral governor. is preserved, viz., a benevolent disposition to maintain, by the requisite means, his authority as the necessary condition of the highest happiness of his kingdom. In both cases also, there is a further meaning. In the one, it is a benevolent disposition to maintain his authority by legal sanctions; in the other, by an atonement.

One of these particular kinds of justice as the attribute of a moral governor is, according to usage, called distributive justice. For the other, it occurs so rarely as an actual existence or fact, that usage has furnished no name. I know not why it should not be called, as I have called it, atoning justice. It is really a disposition to maintain the authority of the moral governor in the circumstances in which an atonement is provided, as is that disposition to do the same thing in other circumstances, by executing the legal penalty. The act of providing an atonement is as really the act of the moral governor, done for the purpose of manifesting his justice, as the act of inflicting the legal penalty on transgressors. His justice, that is, his disposition to maintain his authority, is seen not less clearly through an atonement than it would be in the infliction of the legal penalty.

Further: distributive justice may be subdivided into two subordinate kinds, viz., a benevolent disposition to maintain authority by a legal reward to obedience, and a benevolent disposition to maintain authority by a legal penalty for disobedience.

The difference between these two subordinate kinds of distributive justice needs to be more fully unfolded. In respect to the former, viz., a benevolent disposition to maintain necessary authority by a legal reward to obedience, there is a twofold obligation and a twofold right. There is an obligation both to the obedient subject and also to the public to reward him, arising from his relation as an obedient subject; and there is a reciprocal right on the part of the subject, and also on the part of the public, that he should be rewarded. In respect to the latter, viz., a benevolent disposition to maintain necessary authority by a legal penalty for disobedience, there is but one obligation and one right. There is an obligation to the public to inflict the penalty on the disobedient subject, but none to the subject himself; and there is a reciprocal right on the part of the public to its infliction, but none on the part of the Subject himself. The importance of this difference between the two subordinate kinds of distributive justice, as showing how distributive justice toward an obedient subject can in no case be dispensed with, and how distributive justice toward a disobedient subject can in a certain case be dispensed with, will more fully appear hereafter.

I have thus attempted to classify the different kinds of justice as a morally right state of mind, for the purpose of clearly distinguishing from all other kinds, that kind which constitutes justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor. If this classification comprises all the different kinds of justice as a morally right state of mind, and if it correctly exhibits the genus and the species of justice which in different circumstances and cases can be predicated of a perfect moral governor, then it is evident that justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor, in all circumstances and cases, is what I have defined it to be, viz., a benevolent disposition on the part of a perfect moral governor to maintain by the requisite means his authority as the necessary condition of the highest happiness of his kingdom, the obligation to which arises from the

peculiar relation of his kingdom, and implies a right on the part of his kingdom corresponding to such obligation on his part.

It will not be pretended that what is thus defined as the attribute of justice which is peculiar to a perfect moral governor, is not properly and truly called justice on his part. What is now claimed is, that nothing different from this, either less or more, can in all cases and circumstances constitute this attribute. It cannot, as we have seen, be synonymous with general benevolence, since general benevolence is concerned for, and committed to secure the highest happiness of his kingdom in all respects, or in respect to every thing on which this happiness depends; while justice as the peculiar attribute of a perfect moral governor is concerned for and committed to secure the highest happiness of his kingdom in only one respect, or in respect to only one thing on which this happiness depends, the support of his authority. His authority must be maintained or all is lost. Again: justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor, being one particular form of benevolence, cannot include other particular forms of benevolence, as veracity, compassion, mercy. Nor can it include various other particular forms of justice which arise from other relations of moral beings; such, for example, as commutative justice; for then it could not be that kind of justice which is peculiar to the relation of a moral governor. Nor can it include in all cases the particular kinds of justice as the general attribute of a moral governor, either distributive justice, or what I have called atoning justice. In giving forth the law of his government with its requisite sanctions, and prior to all acts of obedience and disobedience, the moral governor makes a full and decisive manifestation of his justice. But this is not the manifestation of a disposition, will, or purpose actually to reward an obedient subject; for as yet there is no obedient subject. If the moral governor is omniscient, then he may know that there never will be a perfectly obedient subject to be rewarded. Nevertheless he may be perfectly just, and most decisively prove his perfect justice, without an absolute will or purpose to reward an obedient subject by proving his will or purpose to maintain his authority. So likewise, in the case now supposed, there is no decisive manifestation of an unqualified absolute will or purpose to punish a disobedient subject, and this for two reasons, one is, that there is no decisive proof that there will be a disobedient subject to be punished, or that he as an omniscient

ruler does not know that there will not be; and the other is, that if there should be a disobedient subject, there is no decisive proof that he will not be pardoned through an atonement to be provided. Even in case of universal disobedience on the part of subjects, and under a perfect atonement, it is possible that the moral governor should be perfectly just and wholly dispense with distributive justice by the forgiveness of all. Nor can justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor in all cases include what I have called atoning justice; for it is quite possible that, in case of transgression, the moral governor should be perfectly just and provide no atonement, either by rewarding the obedient and punishing the disobedient, or by rewarding all if all are obedient, or punishing all if all are disobedient. I am not saying that the hypothetical proposition, that if there should be a perfectly obedient subject justice would not reward him, is not true. It is most undeniably true that he would. I am not saying that the hypothetical proposition, that if there should be a disobedient subject, there is not good and sufficient reason to believe, under a merely legal system, that he will be punished. There is such evidence. But I am saying that neither of these particular forms of distributive justice is essentially involved in the attribute of justice as an attribute of a perfect moral governor, and that, as the case may be, he can be perfectly just, though this attribute does not include either of these particular forms of justice, or any other particular form of general or public justice, as distinguished from another particular form. A benevolent moral governor, in promulging the best law with its requisite sanctions, fully evinces, prior to all obedience or disobedience on the part of his subjects, his perfect justice. But what is this perfect justice which he evinces by the supposed act? Not the perfect justice of a perfect moral governor in any one of its specific forms or kinds before specified. He rewards no one, he punishes no one; nor from the nature of his attribute of perfect justice merely, can it be inferred that he actually willed or purposed to do either in distinction from the other; or rather the nature of this attribute does not imply an absolute disposition or purpose to adopt any one particular mode of maintaining his authority, either by rewarding an actually obedient subject, or by punishing an actually disobedient subject, or by preferring an atonement to the adoption of another particular mode. There is however decisive proof, even all the case admits of, of an unqualified determination or purpose to maintain, by the requisite means, his authority as the necessary means of the highest happiness of his kingdom. It is obvious therefore, that the only sense in which justice can

be conceived to be a permanent immutable disposition or attribute of a perfect moral governor in all cases, is that in which this attribute has now been defined. In every case it must be all that which is included in the definition, and in every case is perfect justice though it include nothing more. The only sense therefore in which the word justice can be defined as applicable to all these cases, or as denoting that which is common to them all, is a benevolent disposition of the moral governor to maintain by the requisite means his authority as the necessary condition of the highest happiness of his kingdom.

I proceed to say --

In the second place, that the view now maintained of justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor, is strongly confirmed by the consideration that it is exempt from important errors which pertain to other views of the subject, and is consistent with other great and acknowledged truths.

1. It specifies one essential kind or form of justice on the part of a perfect moral governor, which in the view maintained by a prominent class of divines is entirely omitted.

Justice as now defined -- justice as a disposition to maintain the authority of a perfect moral governor -- is surely one kind of justice on his part. Indeed, if what has been said be true, it is the only kind of justice which is peculiar to this relation. But this kind of justice, in that classification of all kinds of justice into commutative, distributive, and general justice, is entirely omitted and unknown. Thus the class of divines now referred to, fail to recognize the existence of that attribute of justice which is peculiar to a perfect moral governor in all cases, and which he alike possesses and manifests, whether prior to all action on the part of subjects he simply gives the best law with the requisite sanctions, whether subsequent to action on the part of subjects he rewards the obedient or punishes the disobedient, or whether he pardons the latter on the ground

of the atonement.

2. The view now maintained avoids the error of confounding general or public justice with general benevolence.

This is done, as we have seen, in one mode of classifying the different kinds of justice. According to what has been said, general benevolence is concerned for, and is committed to promote the public good in all respects, and is of course concerned for, and committed to the securing and employing all the necessary means of the public good. Among these necessary means of the public good, one is the maintenance of the moral governor's authority, and general benevolence as committed to secure this is general justice. General benevolence and general justice differ, as general benevolence is -- concerned for, and committed to secure the public good in all respects and by all the necessary means, and as general justice is concerned for, and committed to secure the public good in one respect and by one necessary means, viz., the maintenance of the moral governor's authority. General or public justice -- justice as the peculiar attribute of a perfect moral governor -- stands as the guardian, not of the public good, as this depends on every necessary means necessary to it, but as it depends on one means of it -- the authority of the moral governor.

3. This view of justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor, which is now maintained, avoids the error of those who represent an atonement as rendering pardon consistent with general benevolence.

Dr. Edwards and others maintain that the atonement of Christ satisfies justice in the sense of general benevolence that it not only supports the authority, of law, but renders it consistent with the glory of God and the good of the whole system to pardon the sinner. We have already shown that from this view of the subject, in connection with the doctrine of universal atonement and other views of a large class of divines, the doctrine of universal salvation follows as an unavoidable consequence.

According however to the view now maintained, an atonement does not render the pardon of the transgressor consistent with justice in the sense of general benevolence, which Dr. Edwards admits to be an improper sense of justice, but with justice as the peculiar attribute of a moral governor, properly so called, viz., with justice as committed to uphold the authority of the moral governor as one indispensable means of the public good. Now it is obvious that many things besides an atonement may be necessary to render the pardon of the transgressor consistent with general benevolence. For example, to render the pardon of a transgressor consistent with general benevolence, it may be necessary that he should return to obedience by faith and repentance, since otherwise the act of pardon might produce more evil than good. But such an inconsistency between pardon and general benevolence can be removed, not by an atonement but only by faith and repentance on the part of the transgressor. So we may suppose that to pardon a transgressor under an atonement on condition of his faith and repentance, might be followed with his apostasy or occasion the revolt of other subjects, and so be inconsistent with benevolence. In neither case can pardon be rendered consistent with benevolence simply by an atonement. If we suppose the facts so changed in these cases that pardon shall be consistent with general benevolence, still such consistency in no respect depends on an atonement, but solely on the conduct of the subjects. It is plain therefore that an atonement cannot render the pardon of a transgressor consistent with general benevolence in all respects. On the contrary, while it must be conceded that an atonement can render it consistent with general benevolence in one respect to pardon the transgressor, viz., as general benevolence in the form of general justice is committed to uphold the authority of the moral governor, it is obvious that this is all that it can do to render pardon consistent with general benevolence.

If the pardon of the transgressor on condition of repentance would be consistent with general benevolence in all respects under an atonement, then he could be pardoned without an atonement, were it not for the inconsistency of his pardon with maintaining the authority of the moral governor. Without an atonement, this inconsistency would be indeed an insurmountable but still the only obstacle. To remove this inconsistency,

that is, to render it consistent with benevolence, in one respect to pardon such a transgressor, viz., as benevolence is committed to uphold the authority of the moral governor, is therefore the only and the whole effect which need be or can be produced by an atonement. In other words, the only and the whole effect of an atonement is to render the pardon of a transgressor consistent with general or public justice -- justice as the peculiar attribute of a perfect moral governor.

Should it here be said that the act of requiring faith and repentance as the condition of pardon, is as truly necessary to uphold the authority of the moral governor as an atonement, this may in some respect be admitted. The act of the moral governor in requiring repentance and faith, may be indirectly necessary to the maintenance of his authority as is every other act of benevolence, viz., as the proof of his benevolence, or as the want of it would prove his want of benevolence, and thus indirectly necessary to evince his right to reign, that is, his authority. But this requirement has no direct tendency in its own nature to uphold the authority in pardoning a transgressor. For if the requirement and compliance with it be supposed, the act of pardon without an atonement would involve the subversion of authority as absolutely as it would without such requirement; while were it consistent with the public good in other respects than that of supporting authority to pardon without repentance, an atonement would fully support authority. The requirement of repentance may be necessary to manifest the moral governor's benevolence in some respect, so far as this may depend on the reformation of the pardoned transgressor; but it cannot manifest his benevolence in another respect, viz., as absolutely committed to uphold his authority as the indispensable means of the public good. This is the exclusive effect of an atonement.

What has been said to show that an atonement does not render it consistent with general benevolence, but only with general or public justice to pardon the transgressor, may be illustrated by a supposable instance of commutative justice. Suppose that A owes B a sum of money, and that the obstacle to B's remitting the debt is, that commutative justice requires, as the dictate of general benevolence, that A makes the

payment. But C becomes A's sponsor, giving ample security for the payment of the debt to B, if he will consent to exempt A from the payment; and thus, so far as commutative justice is concerned, B may relinquish his demand on A. Now it does not follow from this that B can do this consistently with general benevolence. For it may be true that to relinquish his demand on A, while it will in no respect be inconsistent with commutative justice, will only encourage an idleness and profligacy, and conduct him and many others to irretrievable ruin. So a moral governor may by an atonement remove every obstacle to the pardon of the transgressor arising from the attribute of justice, or from benevolence as committed to uphold his authority, and yet there may be other reasons why general benevolence requires that he withhold pardon and punish the transgressor.

4. The view of the attribute of justice in a perfect moral governor now maintained, shows the error of supposing that an atonement renders pardon consistent with distributive justice.

Distributive justice is a disposition to treat, and in overt action does treat, subjects according to their personal deserts. But surely an atonement does not, and cannot render pardon consistent with treating the transgressor according to his personal deserts. In whatever form of justice pardon is rendered consistent with justice by an atonement, it cannot be that particular form of justice which is properly called distributive justice. This is to say, that to pardon the transgressor is consistent with treating him according to his personal desert; that is, that pardon and punishment are consistent -- that is, a subject may be both pardoned and punished, which is absurd. All atonement cannot render the pardon of the transgressor either consistent or inconsistent with distributive justice. An atonement can render pardon consistent with general or public justice. But pardon and distributive justice -- pardon and punishment at the same time -- are necessarily in their own nature palpably inconsistent, and therefore cannot be rendered either consistent or inconsistent with each other by an atonement or by any thing else.

And yet palpable as is this absurdity, many divines have maintained that an atonement renders the pardon of the transgressor consistent with distributive justice. The expedient by which this conclusion has been obtained, is the theory or doctrine of imputation -- a theory which seems to have had its foundation in the assumption, that justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor is distributive justice, and that of course an atonement in rendering pardon consistent with justice, must render it consistent with distributive justice. Hence the theory or doctrine of imputation, as we have already described it, was evidently adopted as furnishing the only possible method of explaining what obviously needed explanation -- how a transgressor could be pardoned, and at the same time be treated according to his personal deserts -- that is, how he could be both pardoned and punished at the same time. My object here is not to examine a theory which I deem palpably preposterous as well as unscriptural; but rather to trace it to its origin and to show how one error leads to another, or rather to many others, and especially how wise and good men, when they have combined error with truth, will, for the sake of the truth, not only maintain the error, but in order to vindicate it plausibly, will do the most palpable violence to reason and common sense.

The class of divines now referred to, evidently saw and felt bound to maintain the truth, that an atonement must render pardon consistent with justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor. But their error, their first error, was, that justice as the attribute of a perfect moral governor is in the case of transgression necessarily distributive justice, and thus obliges to a retributive punishment, or the infliction of the legal penalty according to personal demerit. Hence the imputation of sin to the sinner's substitute, with the supposed corresponding result of pardon, and full and exact retribution according to personal demerit. Now this theory with its connections and results vanishes at once, not merely as absurd and impossible in the nature of things, but as founded in nothing but a false view of the justice of the perfect moral governor. This is not as we have seen in all cases, nor in the case now under consideration, necessarily distributive justice. It is simply a benevolent disposition to uphold the authority of the moral governor by the requisite means; and this, whether in the present case by the infliction of penalty on the transgressor or by an atonement. If this be not so -- if justice require in the absolute sense

the infliction of penalty in the case of transgression -- then an atonement and pardon on the ground of it would be impossible. All that justice requires is, that the authority of the moral governor be maintained; and since this can be done by means of an atonement as well as by inflicting the legal penalty, pardon through an atonement is consistent with justice. Without distributive justice, and without imputation and its palpable and manifold absurdities, and with all immense diminution of misery and a vast increase of happiness in the universe, the throne of justice stands in all its majesty -- for mercy and truth are met together -- righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Thus an atonement, while it renders pardon consistent with general or public justice, does not and cannot render it consistent with distributive justice. Pardon under an atonement is consistent with the full authority of the lawgiver, this being sustained by the atonement, and also with the public good so far as this depends on the support of this authority. The transgressor may be pardoned without the sacrifice of one item of the influence which is peculiar to the law or authority of the moral governor, and without the least violation of his obligation to the public to maintain, or the least infringement of their right that he should maintain that authority unimpaired. But pardon under an atonement is not consistent with distributive justice, for it is not consistent with treating the transgressor according to his personal deserts. The atonement does not remove his personal ill-desert. If it did, then pardon or forgiveness would be an absurdity and a solecism, for there would be nothing to be forgiven. On the contrary, his personal ill-desert remains under an atonement, and though the public good as this depends on the support of the lawgiver's authority, does not demand the punishment of the transgressor as it would without an atonement -- that is, his being treated according to his deserts -- yet if the public good demands in any other respect or for any other reason that he be so treated, there is nothing in the nature of an atonement nor in any thing else to prevent his being so treated -- that is, to prevent his punishment. The justice -- of the lawgiver is fully manifested, for his authority is fully maintained by an atonement. By this provision he is neither obliged to pardon nor to punish, but is free to pardon or to punish, as the public good shall require, without violating the right of the public or any right of the transgressor. If we suppose an

atonement for all, then not only might all be pardoned so far as safety to the authority of the law or of the lawgiver is concerned, but all who will believe may be pardoned, with safety to every other interest of the kingdom.

APPENDIX -- No. II:
ESSAY ON THE PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT
OF GOD.

PART I. -- RELATION OF PROVIDENTIAL TO MORAL GOVERNMENT.

Providential and moral government defined. -- Moral government included in providential. -- All events fall under providential government. -
- Grounds of the certainty of deferent kinds of action differ in their nature and their design. -- In what sense does God purpose wrong moral action?

THE government of God is both providential and moral. I shall attempt to describe and show the difference between them so far as they relate to the purposes of God.

The providential government of God consists in that system of influence by which he secures the accomplishment of his providential purposes; i.e., those purposes which respect the certainty of the events purposed.

According to this definition the providential government of God directly respects all his own acts, as these are the objects of his providential purposes; i.e., he employs his power in performing all those acts which he purposes to perform. It indirectly respects all the acts and agencies of creatures, as these fulfill his purpose that they shall take place. It thus comprises his own direct agency in performing those acts of his own by which he produces effects as their proximate efficient cause, and those acts also by which he produces the grounds of the certainty of the acts and operations of all created beings and things.

The moral government of God consists in that influence which is designed and fitted to secure right moral action in moral beings rather than wrong. This influence I, have already described as consisting in the simple influence of authority on moral beings through the medium of law. It respects only one single purpose or will, viz., that right moral action

should (not shall) take place rather than wrong. It consists not in any act or acts of God, but simply in that influence which arises from the full expression of his will in the form of law. While it is designed to produce right moral action rather than wrong, and is adequate to produce, and if uncounteracted by its objects would produce the former, still it does not necessarily imply, as we have already shown, an influence which will actually secure right moral action. It is an influence on beings who have power to counteract it, and thus to defeat the direct end which it is designed and fitted to accomplish through their agency. It may indeed, in entire consistency with its nature, actually secure right moral action; and yet there may be a perfect moral government, under which not right but wrong moral action on the part of subjects is certain, even universal.

The purpose or will of God which is expressed in his law is not a purpose that its object -- viz., right moral action -- shall take place, but a preference that it should take place rather than wrong; a preference of the manner in which he would that his moral creatures should act. This preference does indeed imply a providential purpose actually to secure the highest amount of obedience on the whole, which he can secure by furnishing the necessary means of this end, or the ground of its certainty. The purpose however which respects the certainty of right action and the means of it, is not the same as the purpose or preference that right action should take place rather than wrong. The latter preference must, in the order of nature, precede the purpose to secure the actual existence of the former.

While therefore moral government implies an influence which, considered in relation to the powers of its subjects, is adequate to produce right moral action, and implies a preference of right moral action rather than wrong moral action while it implies also every kind and degree of influence that will secure the highest amount of obedience which the moral governor, if benevolent, can secure -- and while in some cases, or even in all, it may actually secure and be intended to secure right moral action, still it is not essential to its nature that it secure right moral action even in one instance, much less in all instances.

To mark clearly this distinction between the providential and moral government of God, it is necessary further to remark, that the influence which I have called, moral government may, without losing its peculiar character, become also a part of his providential government, although that influence which we call providential government cannot become a part of his moral government. The former is true, when the influence called moral government is used with a design or purpose actually to secure right moral action. This influence would be complete and perfect considered as that of moral government, though it were used with no other preference than that the subjects should obey rather than disobey the law, and though all should rebel. But when, as the case may be, the moral governor can secure right moral action, knows he can secure it, and purposes actually to secure it by the influence of moral government, then this influence, without losing its distinctive character, becomes an influence of his providential government, being used not only with the preference that the subjects should obey rather than disobey, but also with a further design or purpose actually to secure their obedience. Thus this influence, considered as used with the simple preference that subjects should obey rather than disobey, is the influence of moral government, and when also used with the further design or purpose actually to secure obedience, it is an influence of providential government. It is obvious however that the influence of providential government, being designed merely to secure the certainty of the event which is its object, can never be used merely with the preference that the event which is its object should take place, and therefore cannot become the influence called moral government.

If these remarks be just, then that influence which we call moral government, when it is used actually to secure right moral action, becomes also, without losing its distinctive character, a part of that influence called providential government. Hence if we assume that God's providential purposes extend to all actual events, it will follow that all actual events are brought to pass by his providential government. Here however there is one grand peculiarity in respect to right moral action. When this actually occurs, although the influence by which it is brought to pass is an influence of providential government, and designed to accomplish the purpose that the action shall take place, yet this same

influence is also called moral government. It is still the simple influence of authority, and as such is the same influence, whether right moral action be secured by it or not, or whether there be any providential purpose to secure it or not. Nor is this all. It is that peculiar influence by which alone as the proximate influence, obedience to a moral governor can be secured. All other providential events, except such obedience and its results in happiness, may be secured without this influence as their appropriate antecedent. But voluntary submission to the will of a lawgiver can be proximately secured by no other influence than the authority of a lawgiver.

According to the preceding view of the subject, it follows that all actual events, considered as events -- even the existence of that peculiar influence called moral government -- fall under the department of providential government, inasmuch as they are all the objects of God's providential purposes, and brought to pass by that influence which we call providential government. This universal fact however, does not exclude or conceal the peculiarity of that influence called moral government, as the great influence to whose existence and efficacy all other influences are subservient, for the sake of its results in character and happiness.

That those influences which result in events in the material world fall under the department of providential government, will not be doubted. A question however may naturally arise whether some other influences which, according to the present view of the subject, would belong to providential government, do not more properly fall under moral government. I here refer to the influence of motives, and to any other influences which may be supposed directly to reach the mind and secure obedience; particularly whether the acts of giving a law to moral beings, and furnishing motives to obedience, are not properly a part of moral government? The answer to this question depends on the principle of classification we adopt, or on the views we form of the two departments. If we include under the department of moral government those acts of God, or those events directly consequent on his acts, like the act of giving a law, which have a direct bearing on moral action in creatures,

then indeed these acts fall within the department of moral government, To this mode or principle of classification however there lies, if I mistake not, one serious objection, if no more -- viz., it utterly confounds the two departments. For example, the trials of life and the gifts of divine bounty have as direct an influence on moral action as the giving of a law, or the furnishing of motives to obedience in any other mode. But the former, by universal consent, are denominated

Providential events. Indeed all that God does in all the varying modes of dispensation, has a bearing, more or less direct, on moral action in creatures, as we shall have occasion hereafter to show. Nor do I believe it possible, on the principle of such a connection of events with moral action, to draw any clear line of demarkation between the two departments of the divine government.

The principle now proposed seems to me at least, to be the only one on which any correct classification of events under the two departments can be made. Moral government is an influence on moral beings; an influence to produce simply right moral action in moral beings. It is designed, so far as there is any purpose formed in the divine mind in regard -- to the moral quality of actions, to produce those which are right and no other. But the acts of God in giving a law, supporting it by sanctions, and providing means of conveying truth to the mind, &c., are not this influence, but are acts from which this influence results. It is this influence only, resulting from these acts, which can affect or move moral beings as subjects of a moral government. The acts themselves can produce no such event as their proper. and proximate effect. The acts therefore of giving a law, sustaining its authority by sanctions, providing means of conveying truth to the mind, are not constituent parts of moral government, but are providential acts which are necessary to that influence which constitutes moral government.

If the preceding remarks be just, then the certainty of all moral action results from the government of God, and the question naturally arises, why is not all moral action to be placed under the same department?

God, it may be said, provides alike for the certainty of every right and every wrong moral action, and why is not this provision one and the same, and to be known by the same name? I answer, while it is true that God provides for, i.e., furnishes the grounds of the certainty of every right and every wrong moral action that takes place, these grounds are widely diverse in the two cases. They differ in their nature and in their design.

They differ in their nature. The influence which is the ground of the certainty of right moral action, is in its appropriate tendency, fitted to produce right moral action in every being on whom it operates, and has no other tendency in respect to him. In case it fails to produce its appropriate result, i.e., in the case of certain wrong moral action, this failure or this wrong moral action can in no sense be ascribed to this influence. It is always sufficient for its end, viewed in connection with the powers of the subject. Wrong moral action therefore cannot be ascribed to this influence, even on the ground of its imperfect degree, because if it fails of its end, the failure is not owing to its deficiency as means or influence, but to the counteraction of it by the agent who is its subject. When wrong moral action is certain, it is to be traced either to the strength of propensities to natural good in the subject, or to the degree of temptation which assails him -- an influence widely different from that which we have denominated moral government -- an influence so different, that to yield to it implies the direct counteraction of the other. Now things so different are properly distinguished by different names, while to make no distinction between them, is to annihilate right and wrong in the actions of moral beings. While therefore the government of God furnishes the grounds of the certainty of every right and every wrong moral action, the grounds, of this certainty in the two cases are widely different in their nature -- the one we denominate moral government, the other providential government.

Again: they differ widely in their design or purpose. We shall hereafter see some of the different respects in which God may be said to purpose different events. This difference has an important application to the present subject. Thus God, in the character of a moral governor, purposes right moral action and not wrong moral action; i.e., he prefers in

every instance that moral agents should act right and not wrong, so that wrong moral action compared with right moral action is never an object of the divine purpose or preference, while right moral action is always the object of his preference compared with wrong moral action in every instance in which the latter occurs. Such is the only purpose or preference which God has in relation to moral action. He knows no other. Now we say that the influence which he provides for the accomplishment of this single preference for moral actions as such, deserves a name. We say the purpose itself is distinct from every other purpose of God, and the influence appointed and designed for its fulfillment is in its design also distinct from every other. It is true, as we have already said, that this influence is provided by providential government. But then by this influence, viz., moral government, a design or purpose is to be answered which no act or influence of providential government is designed directly to answer -- viz., a purpose that there should be right moral action rather than wrong. This is a preference that moral agents should, and not that they shall act right. The only design of the providential acts which result in this influence is, that they shall result in it. Here their design terminates; and when these acts have produced the degree of influence that will result in right moral action, the purpose which respects the moral quality of actions is not gratified, but simply the purpose to furnish the means of gratifying it. In a word, the providential governor furnishes, in fulfillment of his purpose, the moral governor with the means of fulfilling his peculiar purpose. Thus the purposes of the providential governor are wholly subservient to the grand purpose of the moral governor, and obviously distinct from it. Of course providential government and moral government differ widely in their design.

This difference will appear still more clearly if we inquire in what respect God may be said to purpose wrong moral action. Does he purpose it in a moral respect? does he prefer its existence in any case to right moral action? has he put into operation any system of influence which bespeaks such a preference? If he has established a moral government, the law of which requires right moral action, then he has no such preference, and has done nothing to gratify it. But if God does not prefer wrong moral action to right -- if he has no preference for the former in respect to moral qualities -- in what sense can he have a purpose that

wrong moral action should exist? I answer, he can be conceived to have such a purpose only in one respect, namely, that wrong moral action is to him unavoidably incident to the necessary means of the greatest good. It falls into the system aside from his main design, and in opposition to that design. It is therefore itself designed only as an evil, incidental so far as divine prevention is concerned, if the system be adopted. The system itself is not designed to produce it rather than right moral action, but the contrary. But either the system must not exist or sin must exist. The existence of the system with this inseparable evil, God purposes; i.e., he prefers the existence of the system to its non-existence with this inseparable evil. Such a purpose that sin shall be, is perfectly consistent with another purpose, viz., that compared with obedience, sin should not be. God, instead of a purpose that sin should be when compared with obedience, has an unqualified purpose that it should not be. To prevent its existence and to secure obedience, he has in fact done all he could do in the circumstances in which it exists. It results only from that which is the necessary means of the greatest good, as a consequence which God cannot prevent without the sacrifice of these means.

Let any one then compare the purpose of God that obedience should exist in preference to sin, with the only purpose which he can be supposed to have in respect to the existence of sin, and he will see that as moral acts, on the one the heart of God is supremely fixed, and that the other he only wills in the form of acquiescing in an unavoidable evil. Let any one compare the influence which is provided to secure, and actually does secure obedience when it exists, with that which is the direct occasion of the existence of sin, and how widely different is all that God designs and does in reference to the existence of one, from what he designs and does in its relation to the existence of the other. While then the certainty of all moral action results from the government of God, yet this government in relation to one class of these actions is so diverse from it in relation to the other, that truth and propriety both require that this diversity should be marked and described. This diversity, for aught I see, is accurately defined by dividing his government into moral and providential, and whether I have succeeded in drawing the line of demarkation between them or not, I am satisfied that the distinction is real and important. I am fully convinced that as the consequence of not

making this distinction, or making it but imperfectly, the theology of many has tended directly to conceal that character of God, in which above all others he would be known and recognized by his intelligent creatures, and that instead of a moral governor willing the obedience of his children, with the most unqualified sincerity and most solicitous affection, God has appeared only or chiefly as an omnipotent disposer of all things, whose pleasure can in fact be known only by actual events, and whose decrees render nugatory the purposes and agency of his dependent creatures.

PART II. -- THE PROVIDENTIAL PURPOSES OF GOD.

Topics to be discussed. -- Remarks on the terms decrees, predestination, &c. -- I. Nature of the divine purposes. -- II. Their extent; they include every event. -- III. The certainty of their accomplishment. IV. The mode of their accomplishment: 1. As they respect events in the material world; Question argued at length in respect to the efficiency of second causes; 2. As they respect the sets of moral agents. -- These determined by the constitution of man and his circumstances. -- Objections considered.

According to the views given of this subject in the preceding discussion, the providential government of God consists in that system of influence or control by which he secures the accomplishment of his providential purposes.

The topics which next claim consideration are the universality of his providential government, and the mode of its administration. And here it is obvious that every question on these topics must depend on the universality of his providential purposes, and the mode of their execution; since it is undeniable that God's providential government must be co-extensive with his providential purposes, and the mode of its administration must be identical with the mode in which he executes these purposes. This then brings us to the consideration of what has been commonly called the doctrine of God's decrees.

Here again, as I have often done before, I take occasion to notice the language or phraseology commonly employed on this subject. And I must say that in my own view, the principal terms employed have occasioned much of the controversy respecting it, and that the use of them, if not unjustifiable, ought on the ground of expediency, at least in many cases, to be relinquished. The words to which I allude are decree, predestination, and the like. These words are of heathen origin and of heathen import. They were used originally by those who believed in fate

and destiny, and who applied them, not merely to denote the certainty of events, but to denote also the still further notion or idea of the most absolute natural necessity. If then these terms are to be understood according to their original meaning and use, they surely convey a meaning, or express ideas which are false. With such a meaning they ought not to be adopted, at least in many cases, by the translators or the expounders of the Word of God. I do not intend by this to censure our translators in the instances in which they may have employed some of the terms now referred to; for in my own view, the context in those instances in which the objectionable idea ought to be excluded, does exclude it, as in Rom. viii. 29, the event spoken of is moral conformity to Christ, a conception inconsistent with the heathen notion of destiny.

Nor do I intend to censure those theologians for an unjustifiable use of these terms, who have been careful to define them and to exclude, by their definitions, the objectionable import. I only say that the use of these terms to convey the idea of absolute natural necessity, is a use unjustifiable and ought to be exploded.

Conceding the unquestionable right of any speaker or writer to use terms as he pleases if he defines them, and also the propriety of using terms which in themselves are ambiguous, provided the context limits and defines their meaning, still even in such cases there is room for considerations of expediency. For if after all (and the fact is notoriously common in controversial discussions), the terms will not be understood in the sense in which they are used, it becomes a serious question whether if other terms can be used that will convey to others our real meaning instead of that which we do not intend to convey, we ought not to reject the former and to adopt the latter. Or rather there is no question, for as the object of the use of language is to convey to others the real ideas of our own minds, we are bound, if we can, to use such language as shall accomplish this end. On this principle, I would either exclude the terms decree, predestination, and kindred terms, from discussions of the truth under consideration, or explain them so that they cannot, be misunderstood. I should not indeed expect in this way to prevent all controversy, but I am confident that men of evangelical sentiments may

be brought by it to agree in words, as they do actually agree in things. There is not one of these men who will not admit that under all providential events, however evil, and whether they be viewed as natural or moral evils-we are bound to exercise cheerful resignation to the will and government of God. But yet in the view of many of these persons, to speak of God's decreeing or predestinating moral evil, is to utter a sentiment deserving the severest reprobation. And why? Plainly because they attach very different ideas to these terms, from those which the former phraseology conveys. And yet that phraseology conveys the whole truth, while their ready admission of the truth thus expressed is decisive that the parties agree in things and dispute only about words, a sort of controversy that should be left to philologists and grammarians, rather than agitate the Church of God. For these reasons I adopt, instead of the phrase, the decrees of God, the phrase, the providential purposes of God, and now proceed to consider --

- I. Their nature;
- II. Their extent;
- III. Their certainty; and,
- IV. The mode of their accomplishment.

- I. Their nature.

To this part of the subject our attention has already been directed. The providential purposes of God as they are distinguished from his purpose as a moral governor, are those purposes of God which respect the CERTAINTY OF EVENTS, or purposes that events SHALL BE, or SHALL TAKE PLACE.

That God has formed such purposes in regard to many events, and even in regard to all events which directly depend on his own agency, no Theist will deny. Whatever God does, he always designed or purposed to

do; is a position too plainly true to need argument for its support.

II. Concerning their extent --

I maintain that the providential purposes of God apply to all actual events. The meaning is, that God has from eternity purposed that every event which takes place shall take place. The proof may be thus, stated. God as an omniscient and immutable being forms no new purposes respecting actual events. His purposes therefore are eternal. God also as an omniscient being must foreknow all events. He must therefore purpose either that they shall take place, or purpose that they shall not take place, or be indifferent whether they take place or not. A heathen philosopher would say, "Magna Di curant, parva negligunt." -- (Cic. de Nat. Deorum, 66.) But that God is indifferent to any actual event, however trivial it may appear to us, cannot be justly affirmed, unless it can be shown to have no connection whatever with any other important event. On the contrary, that he is not indifferent to any event, however trivial in our view, is satisfactorily inferred from manifold such events, and those of the highest moment. The cackling of a goose saved Rome. The showing of a fig in the Roman senate caused the destruction of Carthage. Who will pretend that the apostle unjustly appreciated the reality or importance of such connections in his exclamation, "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" so, true in the case to which he applies it, and so applicable to cases innumerable? Who shall tell us the effects on this material system of the annihilation of its least particle, or even of its occupying another place than it does at any moment of its existence? Indeed the connection of which we speak, is so often and so decisively manifested to us, as to warrant the conclusion that the ultimate design or end of God, in the creation and government of this world, may depend on events which in themselves would appear to possess no importance. Hence the inference is authorized, that God can no more be indifferent to one event than to another -- to the floating of an atom than to the ruin of a world. Besides, to suppose God to be indifferent to any actual event, is to suppose him either directly or indirectly to give existence to that event without a reason, which is plainly impossible.

God then must purpose that every actual event shall take place or that it

shall not. But to suppose that he has purposed that an event shall not take place, and does not prevent it, is to deny his power to prevent it. But since nothing can exist except in dependence on God, it were as absurd to say that he could not prevent its existence, as to say he could not abstain from acting. It follows therefore that no event takes place which God has not purposed shall take place; in other words, that God has purposed the existence of all actual events.

It is common to present an argument on this subject founded in the assumption that God cannot foreknow that an event will take place, unless he has purposed that it shall take place. The question is not, whether God can as a matter of fact foresee any event which he has not purposed, but whether, in the nature of things, it is conceivable that he could foresee such an event, supposing it to take place. If by this assumption it be meant that it is inconceivable that God should foreknow that an event will take place which he has not purposed shall take place, or which is contrary to his purpose, allowing the possibility of such an event, I cannot admit it. For since events which are contrary to my purpose are possible, and since I may know that they will take place, so if we suppose any event contrary to God's purpose to be possible, he may also foreknow that event. I may foreknow that my friend who is sick with a fatal disease will die, and it is plain that my knowledge of the fact no more depends on a purpose that it shall be, than my knowledge of any present event which is contrary to my pleasure. It is true however that if it were in my power to prevent such an event, then it would be impossible that the event should take place contrary to my purpose. On this account it is impossible that any event should take place contrary to God's purpose, and therefore we cannot suppose him to foreknow an event which is not in some respect the object of his purpose. Having the power to prevent it he would prevent it, if for some reason or another he did not purpose that it should take place. But then the impossibility that God should foreknow an event which he has not purposed, results not from the fact that he could not foreknow such an event allowing it to be possible, but from the fact that it is impossible that he should foreknow that an event will be which is contrary to his purpose, when we take into consideration his power to prevent it. But this is the same argument with the preceding; i.e., such is the knowledge and such the power of God, that he will suffer

no event to take place which is in every respect contrary to his purpose.

III. The certainty of their accomplishment.

As every actual event fulfills a purpose of God, so no event whose actual existence he has purposed will fail to take place. This is conclusively argued thus. If an event be not within the power of God he cannot purpose that it shall take place. No being can purpose that an event shall take place, the existence of which he knows to be impossible. But such impossibility, so far as it exists, is perfectly known to omniscience. No event therefore whose actual existence God cannot secure can be the object of his providential purpose. Of course every event whose existence God purposes, he can bring to pass, and therefore will bring to pass.

IV. The modo of their accomplishment.

It is the philosophical doctrine of some theologians, that all events are brought to pass by the direct efficiency of God; in other words, that neither matter nor mind possesses efficiency in itself or is in its own nature an efficient cause, but that all material phenomena and mental acts are results of divine efficiency, as directly and truly as the existence of any created thing. To this philosophical doctrine, in its full extent at least, I cannot subscribe. My views of it and of the subject now before us, will be given by considering the mode in which God accomplishes his providential purposes

1. As these respect events in the material world; and,

2. As they respect the acts of created moral agents.

1. As the purposes of God respect events in the material world.

Laying aside miraculous events as not properly belonging to the present inquiry, the topic of discussion is --

Whether second causes in the material world are efficient causes, or whether the phenomena connected with them are to be ascribed to the direct agency of God? This a question which, if I mistake not, it is difficult for us to decide with any high degree of confidence, and the decision of which is of no great doctrinal or practical importance; still, as a topic frequently investigated, it may be well to devote to it some consideration.

In support of the doctrine of direct divine efficiency, in opposition to that of the efficiency of material causes, the following things may be alleged: -- First, that the efficiency of such causes is impossible. This has been often asserted as an axiom, a self-evident proposition, the truth of which no sound mind can doubt, and which no argument is necessary to support. All efficiency, it is said, must exclusively pertain to the Great First Cause. It is enough to say, in reply to this assumption, that it is wholly gratuitous. Others who hold the truth of this position rest it on a different basis. On the ground that matter is incapable of intelligence, and that most if not all effects in the material world are marked with design and bespeak intelligence in their cause, they infer that matter cannot be the efficient cause of these effects. The correctness of this conclusion, admitting that matter is incapable of intelligence, depends on the assumption that an efficiency cannot pertain to second causes, which without possessing intelligence shall produce effects which bespeak intelligence. To pronounce this impossible to an omnipotent Creator, seems to be an assertion entitled to no very high degree of confidence.

In opposition to the doctrine of the efficiency of material causes, it may be still further said that it greatly impairs, if it does not wholly destroy the argument from this part of the creation for the divine existence; for he who can believe that a flower comes into being through an efficiency inherent in matter, can believe that a world or a universe might come into existence in the same way; that there is no greater absurdity so far as the

thing itself is concerned, in supposing the eternal uncaused existence of that substance which we call matter, than in supposing the eternity of that which we call spirit; and that since, if matter actually possesses such efficiency, it is in its own nature capable of it, it will follow that no good reason can be assigned, why the present material system is not the result of such efficiency. For it may be said, if this doctrine be true, then it is proved either that intelligence in the cause is not necessary, to the manifestation of contrivance in the effect, or if it be necessary, then matter being proved to be the efficient cause of effects that manifest contrivance, is proved to possess intelligence; so that since matter by its own inherent efficiency produces such effects, preserving the regularity of the material universe and giving existence to all its phenomena, it might by its own inherent energy have disposed itself into its present form, and be the independent cause of all the changes and results which occur.

To all this it may be replied, that although we ascribe real efficiency to matter, it will not follow that matter possesses intelligence, nor that there is not an intelligent being from whom the efficiency ascribed to matter is itself derived. There may be an efficiency in the particles of matter which shall direct them in given circumstances into the form of a crystal or a rose, and still this efficiency may be derived from an intelligent Creator. The desire manifested by a watch in the division of time, may be traced to the efficiency of the mainspring, and yet we cannot avoid on the one hand, the conviction that intelligence has been employed in the production of the machinery and its results, nor on the other, that such intelligence does not pertain to the materials of which it is constructed, but is exclusively the attribute of its contriver. The supposed efficiency of matter then, is not inconsistent with the existence of an intelligent being as its author by direct agency, and thus indirectly of all its results. But this is not all; the legitimate evidence on the subject conducts us unavoidably to the conclusion that there is such a being. As we have before shown, from the manifestation of contrivance the mind unavoidably infers the existence of an intelligent being, i.e., of a contriver. The fact or principle on which this inference rests is this, that in all cases in which we know the cause of adaptation, we know it to be either directly or indirectly an intelligent cause. Although therefore there are instances of adaptation

which our knowledge does not enable us to trace directly to an intelligent cause, yet we are obliged as sound philosophers to conclude that there is no such instance, which is not to be ascribed either directly or indirectly to an intelligent agent. We do not therefore destroy or weaken the argument from the design or contrivance manifested in material phenomena in support of the existence of an intelligent Creator; for though we ascribe an efficiency to second causes, still that efficiency implies the existence of such a Creator.

It may however be further said, that all the power or efficiency of which we have any decisive evidence pertains to spirit, and that therefore as the phenomena of the material world are effects which are beyond the power of any finite spirits which we know, we are led to the simple but sublime doctrine, that they are produced by the direct and ceaseless agency of the Infinite Spirit.

The reply which may, be made to this reasoning, which I think must be admitted to be plausible, brings me to the arguments on the other side of the question.

It may here be said that although all the efficiency or power which we know, pertains to spirit, yet according to analogy we should be led to believe from this very fact that power or efficiency pertains to other causes. Finding in our own consciousness that certain changes are produced by our own powers or efficiency, and thus that God has created finite agents, the possibility of the fact can no longer be doubted that he can create such agents; and witnessing changes without us connected with what we term causes, precisely as they would did efficiency pertain to them, it may be said that the dictate of philosophy is, that efficiency does actually pertain to these causes. Whether this be the dictate of philosophy or not, what we have already said on the subject in our previous discussions, will satisfy us that such is the actual process of the human mind, and such are its actual conclusions almost without exception.

It is further said, that if efficiency does not pertain to these causes, the creation of the material world is useless. In this I see no force. For it may be replied that all the ends to be answered by giving efficiency to second causes would, so far as we can discover, be accomplished by the regular direct agency of God through the medium of these causes.

It is further said, that the efficiency of second causes is obviously the dictate of common sense, as evinced by the universality of human belief. To this it may be replied, that the universality of human belief may be accounted for, without supposing it to be founded in evidence, by tracing it to the acknowledged propensity of the human mind to exclude God from all its thoughts; and it may be said as a strong confirmation of this, that men of piety are wont to see God in every thing. It may however be doubted whether men of piety derive their views and impressions respecting the presence of God from their belief of his direct agency, for God is as truly presented to the view of the mind which contemplates his power manifested by the efficiency of second causes, as by direct agency through the medium of those causes. He is still brought before the mind as the author of all. Nor can it be doubted that the human mind finds it peculiarly difficult not to believe that there is in the nature of material causes, something which is the ground or reason of their appropriate effects-something for example in the nature of fire, which constitutes it an efficient cause of certain effects, which there is not in water, and vice versa. Indeed no philosopher can decide that God could create such a thing as fire is, and not impart to it such a nature and such an efficiency.

It may be still further alleged, that to deny all efficiency to second causes is to deny the reality of material things. For it may be said, what are they, if they have not a nature or properties -- and what is nature and what are properties, if not a real esse, a real existence? For example, who will say that if you suppose the peculiar property of the loadstone to be taken from it, it would not become a different thing from what it is; and that if you were to go on abstracting one property after another, till all its properties or all its efficiency were taken away or annihilated, that any thing would be left? And so of every thing else. If there be then no

efficiency in these things, there are no real existences without us; and what then are the senses which our Creator has given us, with their inseparable inferences, if you please so to term them, but organs of deception and error? To suppose that our Creator has so constituted the mind, as to lead us into error and mistake in regard to the reality of things, is hardly to be admitted.

On the whole, the specific question before us is perhaps one on which, if confident conclusions are authorized only by demonstrative evidence, we ought not to come to any confident conclusion. I would however say that my own mind inclined, to the belief of the efficiency of second causes. The possibility of the fact cannot be denied. The fact evinced by our own consciousness of the existence of created agents of one sort, not unnaturally leads us to infer, on the principle of analogy, the existence of created agents of another sort. The universality of human belief in some degree corroborates the doctrine, while the apparent necessity either of admitting it or of denying the reality of material things, and thus implicating our Maker in the charge of deceiving his creatures, goes still more strongly to confirm my belief.

Be this however as it may, the preceding remarks show that the intelligent Creator of the material universe is its providential governor. If he is the author of all material phenomena by direct agency, and as truly so as he is of any created existence, then surely all these events take place as the expression of his will and as the accomplishment of his providential purposes. Nor is this conclusion weakened at all by the supposition that he has imparted efficiency to second causes. For still that efficiency is the result of his power, and we may be confident that an omniscient and omnipotent God will no more create such causes of such a nature, or arrange them in such a manner that they shall fail to fulfill his designs, than were his direct agency employed in producing their results. Still therefore, all events in the material universe are the expressions of his will and proofs of his dominion throughout this portion of his works.

It was proposed to consider the mode in which God accomplishes his

providential purposes --

II. As they respect the acts of created moral agents.

If what we have already said on other occasions be true, men are free moral agents; and if what has now been said be true, the providential purposes of God extend to all the actions of men; in other words, God has purposed that every human action which takes place shall take place. The present inquiry is, how does God secure the certainty of the actions of free agents? The more common doctrine of Orthodox divines is, that he does this by motives. In this however, if we would state the whole truth with metaphysical accuracy, we must include the nature or constitution of man; and our meaning must be, that the constitution of man and his circumstances are such as to be the occasion of the certainty of all his actions. Perhaps however this answer to the inquiry may be considered as differing from that which ascribes the certainty of human action to motives, at least in one respect; viz., as it may include a divine influence, which secures in some cases a result which would not be secured simply by the essential constitution of man, and by what we commonly term motives. On this account I prefer it, and for the sake of giving precision and comprehensiveness to the statement of my views on this topic, I choose to say that God secures the accomplishment of those of his providential purposes which respect human action, through the constitution of man and the circumstances in which he acts.

When however I make this statement, I do not question the propriety or truth of that popular phraseology which is often used, and which in words ascribes the certainty of human action in particular instances to some single cause; as for example, to the nature of man, or to temptation, or to divine grace. For as I shall have occasion to show elsewhere, the real meaning of such popular phraseology as authorized by usage comprises all that I mean in the statement which I have made. I would here only observe, that when the actions of man are traced to the nature of man, the meaning cannot be that his nature is the cause considered apart from his circumstances or from the objects of choice; nor when human action

is traced to motives or temptations can it be meant to exclude the nature of man; nor when divine grace is spoken of as the cause, can the object be to exclude the nature of man and the motives to holiness. So that the popular statement, when taken in its true meaning, whatever be its form, comprises all that is included in the more precise and comprehensive statement now made.

To the inquiry, how does God accomplish his providential purposes which respect human action, I answer --

Through the constitution of man and the circumstances in which he acts. In support of this position I observe --

1. That considered simply as an hypothesis it adequately accounts for the certainty of human action.

Who can doubt that physical propensities may be so strong toward a given action or course of action, and the motives or temptations so powerful, that such action will be certain? But if this may be so in one case it may be in all; and unless it can be shown that such is not the ground or reason of the certainty of human action in all cases, then it cannot be asserted that such is not the sufficient ground or reason.

2. Such substantially must be the ground or reason of the certainty of voluntary action in God.

None will deny that the voluntary acts of the Divine Being are certain, nor that the divine nature is a ground of such certainty. But is it not equally undeniable, that there is in the nature of things a ground or reason why a being of such a nature as God, chooses and acts in every instance as he does choose and act? If so, then the real ground or reason of the certainty of his acts is substantially the same with what we affirm to be

the ground or reason of the certainty of human action. The question is, whether it is not so in fact? I answer, there is no absurdity in the supposition that such is the fact, for if such is the ground of the certainty of divine action, it may be of human action. God can in this respect make beings in his own image.

But further, we have no warrant to assert that such is the ground of the certainty of divine action, unless we first assume that such is the ground of the certainty of human action; for we can in this respect reason concerning God only from what we know of ourselves. We know nothing of the nature of voluntary action except from ourselves: so that our decision, whatever it be in regard to the ground of the certainty of such action in God, must rest on the previous decision that the same thing, i.e., the same thing in its nature as a cause, is the ground of the certainty of such action in us. I say then, that from the universal concession of those divines with whom we dispute on this point, viz., that the nature of God and the nature of things are such as to be the ground of the certainty of his acts, it follows that the true dictate of reason is, that the nature of man and the circumstances in which he acts are the ground of the certainty of his acts. I further say, that they do and must admit this to be the fact before they come to their conclusion respecting God, and that this conclusion shows that whether they are aware of the fact or not, and that however inconsistent they may be with themselves, they do admit our present doctrine in regard to the certainty of human action, since it is the only possible basis of their conclusion respecting the certainty of divine action.

3. It is the dictate of common sense, and what all the world believe.

In any inquiry into the reason of any human action, who ever in the exercise of common sense thinks of tracing it to any thing except the constitutional propensities, the objects of choice and other circumstances in which man acts? I speak here of the ultimate cause, ground, or reason of human action.

It is common indeed to trace specific action to the governing purpose, yet if we pursue the inquiry, whence is this governing purpose, we are carried back to the constitution and circumstances of the being. Nor do I appeal here to what must be conceded to be a matter of fact in regard to mankind generally, but to the very philosophers and divines who adopt a different theory. They too, when they would speak to the conviction of their fellowmen, are obliged to trace and do in fact always trace, human action to the cause now assigned. Look into their popular sermons and discourses for example, and see to what cause they trace human sinfulness. It is to the nature of man, or it is to the influence of the world, or to temptation, or to the strength of passion and appetite, and so on, all of which causes are resolvable into the cause which we assign.

4 The same thing is evinced by the consciousness of every human being.

Every one who acts voluntarily or as a free agent, knows why he acts as he does. But whatever be the reason why one acts in a given manner is the reason of the certainty of such action. Now, that this is a matter of human consciousness supersedes any further argument. Nor can we from the nature of the case make any other appeal except to every one's own consciousness. In making this appeal however, strange as it might seem if facts did not confirm it, we are not always sure of a true answer even from honest men. Their philosophy blinds them to the operations of their own minds. Still there is a way to settle the question of consciousness in cases in which a mere appeal to consciousness results in a false answer. I ask then, what is an act of choice? Consciousness must answer that it is a preference of one kind of good to another. I then ask why is there a given choice or preference? Consciousness must answer that such is my known or conscious capacity of good from the object chosen, such are my propensities toward it, such are the views which I take of the adaptation of the object to my happiness, that I choose it. Now I say that there is not a human being that is not in every act of choice conscious of all this. To be more particular, take a sinful choice as an example. What is it, and why is it? Is there a human being who knows what duty is who cannot tell from his own consciousness what the act is which is sin, and also the why and the wherefore of the

act? Does he not know that the act is a preference of worldly good, and does he not know why he prefers this good? Does he not as a matter of consciousness, trace this act of choice to his estimate of the comparative value of the object as an act of his own, and to other inseparable preliminary acts of his own? And does he not trace this act and those connected with it, to his susceptibilities to that good, to the adaptation of the object to his happiness, and to the circumstances, perceptions, and so on, which resulted in this estimate? Does he not know that these things being as they were, he chose as he did? I say if man is conscious of any thing he is conscious of this, and that he is conscious of the reason why he acts as he does in every case. But as we have said, the reason why he acts as he does is the reason of the certainty of his act; i.e., with this antecedent this consequent would certainly follow. It is then out of place here to resort to philosophical arguments drawn from any other source than human consciousness and which contradict its decision. They are false, for consciousness is the highest evidence. Nor do I admit that there are any such arguments whose fallacy cannot be exposed. This is the next topic of inquiry.

To the view which has now been given the following objections deserve notice:

Obj. 1. It may be said that it is inconsistent with one fact, viz., divine influence in the production of holiness. I answer, that when human action is secured by a divine influence, the circumstances of the agent are changed, so that this case is properly included in the theory or doctrine now advanced. True it is, if this be an influence that secures holy action independently of and abstractly from the nature of man as a moral agent, and of motives, then indeed it will follow that God secures one kind of human action in a manner not recognized in the present theory. For there would be no truth or propriety in saying that all human action is secured through the nature and circumstances of man, including in these circumstances the motives to action, provided there is in fact one kind of action which is secured, without having any relation or connection with either man's nature or motives. But if this influence of God does not dispense with the nature of man as a moral agent, nor with the influence

or relation of motives to moral action, but is an influence which is actually coincident with both an influence which results in or secures this event, viz., that such a being as man is, yields to the motives to a given action which are presented to him, when without such influence he would not yield, and when with it he is not obliged to yield by physical necessity -- then it is true in this case that the certainty of holy action is justly traced to the nature of man and to the circumstances in which he acts. For then this divine influence is as really one of the circumstances in which he acts, as are the motives in view of which he acts.

Obj. 2 It is said that independent action in creatures is a physical impossibility. This is argued first, from the nature of creatures as necessarily dependent for their actions on their Creator; and secondly, from the nature of their actions, Considered as effects which must have a cause.

In reply to the first of these positions I remark, first, that it assumes what cannot be proved; viz., that God cannot create an agent, i.e., a being with powers to act. This argument, as presented by those who adopt it, wholly overlooks the distinction between the dependence on God for the power to act and dependence for action itself. Now let it once be admitted that man is an agent, and it is admitted that he has the power of acting. And although he is dependent on his Creator for the power to act, yet when it is conceded that he has received this power, it is the very, perfection of absurdity to say that he is necessarily dependent for action; it is to say we have a power to act and yet cannot act, i.e., have power to act and have not power to act.

Again: the admission that man acts is inconsistent with the principle now under consideration. For what is action but power acting on the exercise or exertion of power? For example, what is an act of volition but an act of the power to will? If this be so, then it is plainly impossible that God or any being should be the author (in the sense of absolute efficiency) of any volition except his own. If it be admitted that there is an influence of one being upon another which causes or occasions the certainty of action

in the latter, still the thing caused or occasioned is action, and is therefore in its own nature an event whose existence as truly and properly depends on the agent or actor as on him who occasions it, and of which, strictly and properly speaking, the agent is the author or efficient cause. To suppose him to be the agent, and a moral agent, is to admit that he has adequate power to act not only as he does, but to act otherwise. Of course, to suppose that the event -- viz., action -- is necessarily dependent in the sense of natural necessity on an influence or efficiency *ab extra*, is to deny the power of acting to one who confessedly acts, and has the power to act as he does and otherwise; i.e., it is to admit and deny at the same time, that he has the power of acting. So that if we admit that man acts in the exercise of a power to act, it follows that instead of its being physically impossible that there should be independent action, i.e., instead of its being thus impossible that there should be action except it be produced by divine efficiency as its physical cause, it is impossible that there should be any such action thus produced in such an agent. For the very nature of action implies that it exists independently of any physical efficiency from without the agent who acts. Or thus:

To suppose action to be produced by an efficiency *ab extra*, as its physical cause, destroys the essential nature of the action by ascribing it not to the power of acting as its efficient cause; for we have no conception of action, except that it is power acting. So that instead of its being impossible that there should be action independent of efficiency, *ab extra*, as its physical cause, it is impossible that there should be action which is not thus independent.

The proposition that man from his nature is necessarily dependent on God for his actions, is then not only inconsistent with the fact that man acts at all in any sense of the term, but the only argument used to support the doctrine rests on what may be confidently affirmed to be a false assumption, viz., that God cannot create an agent. And here I would add, that so far as I know, all who have maintained the doctrine of divine efficiency in the production of human volitions, have rested it on this gratuitous and false assumption.

In reply to the second principle on which the present objection rests, and which assumes that actions are effects, I remark First, that this language is objectionable, because it is liable to convey a meaning in which it cannot be applied to human action. The word effect as used in the present argument, in order that the least plausibility may pertain to the argument, must be used to convey a false meaning. The meaning must be that human actions are physical effects, i.e., events which exist by natural necessity, and of course the existence of all power adequate to their production except divine power, and of all power adequate to any other event, is denied by the terms of the proposition. Thus there is a *petitio principii* in the very outset of the argument. There is also an assumption, which if what we have been saying be true, is inconsistent with the essential nature of an action, while yet the reality of action is conceded. It is an assumption also equally inconsistent with the power of acting in man, since to suppose that actions are physical effects of divine efficiency, and of course that they take place by a natural necessity, is to deny the powers of moral agency to man, and thus to assert that a being acts who has no power to act, i.e., that a being who has power to act has no power to act.

It is to no purpose to say here that man has power to act when acted upon by divine efficiency or power. For still it is saying that he has not natural or physical power to act, that not being power to act, which cannot act without power or efficiency *ab extra* to aid it. Besides, when this power or efficiency is exerted, a given action not only will but must by a natural necessity follow; none other can take place. But the freedom of human action is destroyed by the natural necessity of human action, and confessedly so by those whose scheme is now opposed.

PART III. -- THE DIFFERENT KINDS OR SPECIES OF PROVIDENCE.

Kinds of providence incorrectly divided. -- Providence considered as mediate, particular, universal, ordinary, and extraordinary -- Question of special providence discussed at length.

The providence of God has been divided into ordinary and extraordinary, common and special, universal and particular, mediate and immediate.

1. Ordinary providence denotes that which is exercised in the common course of events through the medium of second causes. Extraordinary is that in which He departs from the common course of events, as by miraculous interference.

2. Common providence, that which pertains to the world; special, that which pertains to the Church.

3. Universal respects a general superintendence of all things; particular respects each individual being and event.

4. Mediate providence is that which is exercised in the use and by the efficacy of means; immediate, that which is exercised without the efficacy of means, though there may be some medium, as a word, &c.

This classification of the modes of God's providence is objectionable, as it makes distinctions without a difference, applies terms in a peculiar sense without definition, and affirms that to be of which there is no evidence.

First, it makes distinctions without a difference. Thus the ordinary

providence of God is not distinguishable from that which is common in the true import of this term; ordinary providence as administered through the medium of second causes is mediate; and since the purposes of God extend to every event, his providence is both particular and universal, as these terms are commonly used.

Secondly, in the above classification terms are used in a peculiar sense without definition and without conveying a distinct meaning. Thus the terms common and special, as they are applied to the providence of God toward the world and toward the Church, are either used simply to denote the different objects of his providence, which is an unreasonable principle of classification, or they are used to designate some difference in the mode of his providence, without specifying what that difference is.

Thirdly, the above classification asserts that to be of which there is no evidence. Thus there is no evidence from the light of nature of a common in distinction from a special providence in the sense intended, or of an immediate providence, nor of a universal providence as distinguished from a particular providence.

For the purpose of simplifying this subject, I remark that the providence of God, or that government of God which we term providential, may be considered as mediate, as particular and universal, as ordinary and as extraordinary.

First, as mediate. That God has acted since the creation of the world immediately in the production of any event, that is, without the intervention of second causes, there is no evidence. That he has acted through the medium of second causes in such a manner as to preclude the belief of the efficiency of second causes and to command the belief of his own direct agency, natural religion cannot deny and revealed religion may fully establish.

Secondly, as particular and in the strict sense universal. This has been already proved in considering the extent of the divine purposes, and the certainty and manner of their accomplishment. There is however a sense in which it has been maintained that the providence of God is not particular, that he only exercises a general superintendence over the affairs of the world, without extending his purposes and his government to every event.

This theory is not only contradicted by what we have already proved respecting the extent of God's purposes, but is most obviously inconsistent with itself. So intimately connected are the events of this world; so entirely in many cases do events the most important in reality depend on the most trivial in appearance, that it is impossible to conceive that God should act as the governor of the world at all, unless his superintendence extend to every event which happens.

Thirdly. The ordinary providence of God is that which is exercised according to certain stated regular laws of operation. The proof that God exercises such a providence is furnished by experience and observation.

Fourthly. The extraordinary providence of God is that in which he dispenses with, or departs from the stated regular laws of operation in the production of events. Thus admitting the facts on the authority of historical evidence, the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and the conducting of them to the land of promise, is an instance of extraordinary providence. So also is every miraculous event.

Besides these kinds of providence another has also been supposed, commonly termed special providence, which, though not producing events strictly miraculous, is deemed extraordinary. It is supposed to differ from that kind of extraordinary providence by which miracles are wrought, as marking less decisively the mighty agency of their author, and to differ from ordinary providence, as satisfactorily evincing a departure from the regular course of events in reference to some special

individual purpose.

Of this view of special providence I remark. It cannot be proved to be impossible.

There is no inherent absurdity or impossibility in such an occasional mode of divine interference, and the assertion of its actual existence is to be received or rejected as the result of the examination of evidence.

2. There is no argument a priori which will support the doctrine. For no necessity for such special interposition to accomplish the purposes of God can be shown. He can arrange the succession of events in that luminous and exact order, from eternity, which shall supersede the necessity of the least variation, and so direct all, that each shall fall in at its appointed time and place.

3. There is no decisive proof of this doctrine from any actual phenomena.

Second causes do not in many cases so clearly and fully come under our observation, as to authorize us to believe in every case in which we cannot assign the particular cause of an event, that it was not produced in the regular way. In those cases in which we possess what we deem satisfactory knowledge of the whole combination of causes, we find no evidence of special interposition from the phenomena themselves. We never see a stone projected at another's head, arrested in its progress lest a wound should be inflicted, nor a falling tree upheld in its descent to furnish time for the escape of one beneath it. It is true that the want of such evidence is not decisive proof against the supposed special interposition. There may still have been a retardation in the motion of the falling tree for the purpose specified, which is not discernible by us. In such cases we cannot say positively that there has not been a special divine interposition; but we can say that any decisive evidence of such interposition is not furnished by any known phenomena.

4. There is a degree of presumptive evidence against this doctrine, from what we know of actual phenomena.

That there is a general continued uniformity in the phenomena of the world is an acknowledged fact. That such uniformity is designed and is even necessary to the creatures of God for the purposes of existence -- that it is maintained regardless of particular consequences -- must also be confessed. But such extensive prevalence leads to the belief of entire universality, so far as any reasoning from the nature of the subject can effect belief. At the same time it must be admitted that this extended uniformity is not decisive proof against the doctrine of special providence; for the maintenance of general uniformity with all its advantages is not inconsistent with occasional special interpositions. The more extensively however we explore, and the more minutely we are able to analyze the phenomena around us, the more are we confirmed in the belief that the regularity and uniformity of cause and effect pervades the whole system, and that a more extended and accurate acquaintance with what is now unknown would fully evince such regularity and uniformity to be universal. Such is the actual influence on our belief when we listen to a narrative of wonders, while to pronounce absolutely that any exception to this general course of providential events is an impossibility, would be a confidence of decision unauthorized by evidence. Should a wave next succeeding to that which had plunged the mariner into the boisterous ocean, bear him again to the place of safety at the very instant of his exhaustion and despair, it might be impossible to say the event was not the result of special divine interposition. But on the other hand, did we know all the causes which in their regular operation resulted in the event, we should feel no surprise on finding it explained by their ordinary influence. So far from it, if we reasoned as we do in similar cases of ignorance, we should confidently expect that such knowledge would furnish such an explanation.

The argument which probably has the greatest influence to conduct the mind to the belief of a special providence, is taken from the supposed peculiar tendency of the doctrine to awaken devotional feelings. It cannot

be doubted that the tendency of the doctrine is to excite devotional feelings. The mariner preserved in the manner supposed, would doubtless find reason for devout gratitude to his deliverer in the supposed peculiar interposition of the Divine Hand. Nor would it be strange if in his ignorance of the second causes which were connected with his deliverance, and in the vividness of his joy while yet sensibly alive to the danger he had escaped, his reasoning should be governed more by his feelings than by a calm and dispassionate estimate of evidence.

The question however, is not whether the belief of this doctrine tends to awaken the delightful and amiable feeling of gratitude to our Divine Benefactor, but whether this tendency pertains to the belief of no other doctrine of providence.

It is undeniable that the view of Divine Providence which supposes special divine interpositions, has a tendency to gratitude superior to that which proceeds from some other conceivable theory of this agency. To suppose for example, that the ordinary events of providence are no expressions of the divine will, that they are merely results of a general providential machinery which produces effects regardless of the individual interests of men, is certainly to remove every ground for this virtue. Nor is it to be doubted that some such plan of providential dispensation as this with respect to all ordinary events, is that which is assumed, and with which is compared that of special interposition, when the superior tendency to awaken gratitude is so confidently assigned to the latter. The mind first removes from its conceptions, every such view of the ordinary providence of God as would tend to produce gratitude at all for blessings received, then imagines one which has indeed a direct and powerful tendency to such an effect, and on this assumption pronounces this tendency peculiar. But such a mode of ordinary providence is not properly introduced into the comparison. The doctrine of ordinary providence supposes a particular purpose of God respecting every event, and that while all events are brought to pass through the intervention of second causes, and as it may be, through a long and connected series of successive causes and effects, the plan in all its minuteness of arrangement lay in the Eternal Mind, and contemplated each event as the

result of an eternal and unchangeable purpose. With such a system then, let the doctrine of special providence be compared in respect to practical tendency.

Two ministers were conversing together: one said he had met with a remarkable providence; for his horse had stumbled on the brink of a precipice, thrown him up on the very verge, and yet he was saved.

The other said that his life had also been preserved by a providence also remarkable; for his horse had not stumbled at all.

1. There is nothing in the scheme of an ordinary particular providence to render our gratitude less under the reception of blessings, than it should be on the supposition of a providence.

That we may make a just estimate of the comparative practical tendency of the two schemes, we must suppose the value of the blessing in a given instance the same, for the inquiry respects not the value of a gift but simply the mode of conferring it. Now the real and the only foundation of gratitude to a benefactor is the manifestation of kindness to us, and the measure of gratitude we owe is in proportion to the measure of kindness manifested. In either of the cases under consideration, it must be admitted that there is a real manifestation of kindness, and of course a real foundation for gratitude. The question is, whether the measure of kindness manifested according to the scheme of special providence, is greater than that manifested according to the scheme of ordinary providence. If there be any difference in this respect, it must result from the mode of conferring the blessing. What then is there in this which bespeaks the difference? The one involves no greater sacrifice on the part of our Benefactor than the other; the blessing is the same in value to us in either case; it comes from the same hand, it is dictated by the same benevolence; that benevolence is shown to be equally intent on our welfare.

The blessing therefore bespeaks the same kindness in our Benefactor in one case as in the other, and therefore lays a foundation for equal gratitude.

It may be true that the belief of a special divine interposition in our own favor, may greatly heighten our gratitude when compared with the influence of our faith in an ordinary particular providence; but the reason may be, not in the different schemes of Providence, but in the weakness of our faith in that which we profess to believe, or even a measure of atheism that mingles with our faith or annihilates it, and thus excludes or nearly excludes from our conceptions the benevolent purpose and the agency of God. Indeed that the supposed, and it may be the real diversity of practical effect is wholly owing to these or other similar causes, will appear from an example which implies an equal measure of faith in the different methods of conferring benefits. Should a human benefactor, foreseeing our future wants, devise and put into operation a train of causes for our relief; should he steadily pursue his benevolent purpose, and should the designed benefit reach us at the very moment of our extremity, every one would feel his obligation to gratitude to be the same as had the blessing come by direct communication.

2. On the scheme of special providence there is far less reason for gratitude on the whole than on the scheme of an ordinary particular providence.

The real ground of gratitude in either case can be nothing more nor less than the manifested kindness of our Benefactor. But if such manifestation be peculiar to the scheme of special providence, it cannot pertain at all to that of ordinary providence. Thus the scheme of ordinary providence furnishes no foundation for gratitude at all, and thus that extended and uniform system of arrangement by which the Author of all is ministering his providential bounties to his dependent creatures is overlooked in our praise for some particular blessing imparted by an occasional and infrequent interposition of kindness. It need not be told how inferior that

tribute of gratitude to God must be which is produced by considering him as only the occasional benefactor of his creatures, compared with that view of his providence which in the whole of this beautiful system of things, makes it a ministration of particular and universal bounty.

3. On the scheme of ordinary particular providence there is a foundation for a higher and a purer gratitude than on the scheme of special providence.

In proportion as we discover the disinterestedness and strength of benevolent affection will our gratitude be augmented in intenseness and in purity. One may confer a kindness on us from sinister motives, and we shall not, we cannot feel real gratitude. He may do it from real affection, and yet that affection be evinced by the mode of its manifestation to be fitful in its nature or to be a mere matter of favoritism. In either case it might not unnaturally be regarded as unworthy of any thing more than a lawful joy in the advancement of our own wellbeing. But how much stronger and purer would our emotions be when called for by that disinterestedness and enlargement of affection, which should as it were, continually watch and promote our happiness in almost ceaseless acts of communication!

There is no reason to doubt that a belief in a special providence has a tendency to produce a sort of selfish congratulation and self-importance, as if we were objects worthy of that kindness which departs from the common course of things for our benefit, and to cherish within us the fond conceit that we are heaven's peculiar favorites. In the imagined special interpositions of his providence, God appears to us as peculiarly provident for us in some circumstances of peculiar necessity; but in that extended and yet minute communication of good which flows from the uniform laws of providential operation, while he is not less but more provident for us as individuals, he appears also in the unmistakable character of the benevolent provider of all. It is surely in the latter character that he preeminently manifests the purity and intensity of his benevolent regards for his creatures, and becomes pre-eminently worthy

of their grateful adoration.

The conclusion is, that if it be too much to assert that there never has been any special interposition of Divine Providence in behalf of individuals, there is no decisive proof that there has been; that it is far more philosophical to believe that there has not been than to pronounce positively that there has.

APPENDIX -- No. III:

**ESSAY ON THE QUESTION -- IN WHAT
DIFFERENT RESPECTS MAY GOD BE
SUPPOSED TO PURPOSE DIFFERENT AND
EVEN OPPOSITE EVENTS?**

PART I. -- QUESTION EXPLAINED AND DISCUSSED.

Importance of the question. -- Confused and unsatisfactory views in respect to it. -- Question stated hypothetically. -- Three suppositions. -- Vindications of the propriety of arguing from the purposes of man to the purposes of God. -- Supposition of a father. -- Application to the present question. -- Illustration to show the use of language.

To give the true answer to this question is of the highest importance, if we would form precise and correct views of certain controverted topics in theology. For if I mistake not, imperfect and false, or rather confused notions on this subject are the chief source of error and dispute. In the controversy between Calvinists and Arminians, some of the most important questions in debate turn upon accurate distinctions in regard to the different respects in which, or the different reasons on account of which, God may be supposed to purpose different and even opposite events. It is undeniable that events take place under the government of God, which are of a directly opposite nature and tendency. How this is consistent with the perfection of his character and government, especially if we suppose that his purposes extend to all events, has been deemed one of the most difficult of theological inquiries. Indeed nothing is easier than to present views of the purposes of God which are in the highest degree perplexing, for there seems to be hardly any subject on which truth and error can be so plausibly combined, through the ambiguity of language, or rather those elliptical forms of speech which usage sanctions. Nor is it too much to say, that apparently contradictory and inconsistent views of this subject, have been not infrequently presented and zealously contended for, even when the best intentions have been shown.

No two events can be more opposite in their nature and tendency than holiness and sin; and to say that God purposes the existence of both, is in Words at least to assert a contradiction. Whether such a verbal contradiction fairly involves a real contradiction, or a contradiction in

ideas according to the true principles of interpreting such phraseology, may be doubted, or rather denied. In such cases of verbal contradiction, and they are not uncommon, we are bound to inquire whether the language may not according to usage have different meanings when applied to different things, and whether by giving it different meanings, the writer is not exempted from the charge of contradiction. If so, the charge is not valid. Still, in my own view the use of such language without qualification or explanation, should be carefully avoided in subjects, of controversy where advantage will be taken of merely verbal ambiguities, to misrepresent, or to become the occasion of misapprehending the real meaning of a writer. I would as far as may be, prevent the perversions of dishonesty, and force even prejudice to see. It is not however always true that dishonesty occasions contradiction on such a question. For there may not be -- commonly there is not that familiar acquaintance with the true method of using and interpreting such language which will in fact prevent misapprehension. Be this however as it may, when it is said that God purposes holiness and God purposes sin, the language is often interpreted in a manner which overlooks the fact that God may purpose opposite events in different respects or for different reasons. With such an interpretation, to say that God purposes sin, is equivalent to saying that he does not purpose holiness, and to say that he purposes holiness, that he does not purpose sin; and to say both, to saying that he purposes and does not purpose one and the same thing. But this is absurd and impossible. Since therefore these events are of such a nature that a perfect God cannot be supposed to purpose both for the same reason or in the same respect, then so to use language as to convey in fact such a meaning, is to leave the subject in inextricable embarrassment. On the other hand, if there can be no different respects in which God can be supposed to purpose these opposite events, then the universality of his purposes must be abandoned.

Similar remarks apply to natural good and natural evil when viewed as objects of the divine purposes.

Now whether it be possible or not to relieve this subject of all embarrassment and difficulty, it is plain that the only way in which we can

hope to succeed in such an attempt, is by showing that God may be supposed to purpose or rather to will different and opposite events in different respects. If the subject cannot be freed from absurdity and contradiction in this way, there is no way in which it can be. Indeed this is the only way in which Calvinists have ever attempted thus to relieve it. The question in respect to them therefore is, not whether God purposes holiness and sin in different respects, or for very different reasons, but what these reasons are.

It ought here to be remarked that absurdity and contradiction are charged in many forms upon the universality of the divine purposes, and that to exempt the subject from inconsistency in one form, is not of course to exempt it from inconsistency in another. What therefore we have to do is, to show that inconsistency is chargeable upon the doctrine in no form or manner whatsoever.

It ought also to be noticed that the present question is stated hypothetically, and that in answering it we are only making suppositions authorized by the known nature of the mental acts which are the subject of inquiry. This course is adopted not only because mere suppositions are sufficient for the purpose at which we ultimately aim, but also because we do not suppose any facts to be established in respect to, the moral perfection or government of God. We are simply inquiring then what facts may be supposed, judging from the nature of things, so that these may be shown to be consistent with facts actually proved. For example, it is true that the purposes of God extend to all actual events both good and evil, and that nevertheless his character and his government are perfect. The design of the present suppositions is to show the entire consistency of these important doctrines.

I proceed then to specify several different respects in which God may be supposed to purpose different and even opposite events.

1. God may purpose an event as the means of a further end, e. g., a

moral system, which has no value in itself or considered abstractly from its relation to consequences, because it is the necessary means of the greatest conceivable good, and because he knows that though the greatest conceivable good will not be, yet that the highest degree of good which he can possibly secure will be the actual result.

It is here supposed that the highest conceivable good, or greater good than is possible in any other way, would result from the combined agency of God and his creatures directed to the production of good, and that some less degree than this, is all that is possible to God.

2. God may be supposed to purpose or to prefer, that an event which he knows will not take place should take place rather than its opposite, because it is good in itself as the necessary means of the highest conceivable and highest possible good, and because he knows that he can secure its existence to such an extent that a higher degree of good can be secured by it than by any thing else in its stead.

3. God may be supposed to purpose an event -- i. e., to purpose that it shall be and to prefer that it should be -- which is not the necessary means of the greatest conceivable good, but which is wholly evil in its nature, tendencies, and relations, because the evil is unavoidably incidental (so far as his power is concerned) to that system which is the necessary means of the highest conceivable and highest actual good, it being true at the same time, that he can bring so much good out of the evil, that the actual result will be the greatest good which he can secure.

Now it is believed that these three suppositions may be so illustrated and applied to the doctrine of the universality of God's purposes, as to remove all the difficulties and objections which have been supposed to encumber it.

With this view I shall attempt to illustrate the propriety of these

suppositions. For this purpose I remark, that since we can reason concerning the consistency of God's purposes with one another, or with other things only from what we know of our own purposes, and since in this manner every possible question on the subject must be determined, it will follow, that if man may purpose in different respects very different and even opposite events, so may God. In other words, the existence of such purposes in the divine mind is possible, so far as the nature of the purpose is concerned. To this last remark, as expressing the fundamental principle on which our subsequent reasoning depends, I request particular attention. I do so, not only because it is desirable that a principle on which so much depends, should not if false be assumed to be true, but because its correctness in this particular application is denied by some, and because it is important that in respect to it the mind should be put entirely at rest. Here then permit me to turn your attention to the precise form in Which the principle is stated. It is not then, that because man may and does purpose different and opposite events in the different respects or for the different reasons described, that therefore God must. Though I may have occasion to show hereafter that such is the fact in respect to God's providential and moral purposes, still in the present instance I do not assert this. The position which I now take is not the assertion either that such is or that such must be the fact, but simply that what is true of man in respect to the purposes in question MAY BE true of God. In other words, I assert not the reality or the necessity of the fact, but merely its POSSIBILITY. That I am justified in taking this position, or assuming the truth of the principle as now stated, on a priori ground, or from the nature of mental operations, is evident for the following reasons:

1. There is no proof that the principle is not true, nor that it is not applicable to the case under consideration.

If this be denied, it belongs to him who deities it to support his denial. And this he must do by showing from the nature of the subject, that what is true of man in respect to his purposes either is not or cannot be true of God in respect to his. This, on a priori grounds of argument, it may safely be said cannot be done. And this, as the subject is now presented, is the only ground proper to be taken by an opponent. Other modes of

reasoning will. be examined hereafter.

2. If our principle be denied, then it will follow that we can know nothing of the divine purposes, and of course nothing of God as a voluntary being.

For it is only by our knowledge of volitions, purposes, &c., in our own minds, that we know or can know what these are in another mind; and of course this knowledge is the only possible foundation of all our reasonings respecting God as a voluntary agent. If our principle be denied then, we not only cannot reason respecting what God is, but we cannot prove that there is a God.

3. Our principle, or rather the most absolute form of it, viz., what is true of man's purposes must be true of God's purposes, has been constantly assumed in all reasonings on the subject.

The principle as I have stated it, ever has been, is, and must be assumed by the very men who oppose the views which I adopt. For whatever theory they adopt respecting God's purposes, they must assume the possibility of its truth, and this simply and solely on the ground that it can be true in respect to the purposes of man. For example, if it be said that God purposes sin as the necessary means of the greatest good, this must be assumed as possible with God solely, on the ground that similar purposes are known to be possible with man. By what mode of fair controversy then is it, that a principle is denied to us, which is and must be reasoned upon by our opponents?

4. If they deny the propriety of reasoning from human purposes to the divine, they must give some reason for it.

I know of none which can be even plausibly assigned, except that God is an infinite being, and that therefore it is rational to suppose that some

things may be, and are widely different in respect to God's purposes from what are true in respect to those of man. That some things may be predicated of God's purposes which cannot be of man's, is undeniable. But it is equally undeniable that some things may and must be predicated of both, as common to both. It cannot therefore be just or true, on account of diversity in some respects, to affirm diversity in all respects, and thus to maintain that nothing is true of one which is true of the other. This would be to talk of the purposes of God without the least idea or notion of the things so called. The question then is, by what principle are we to be governed in determining this diversity and agreement? I answer, the principle and the only principle is, that so far as any known truth respecting the nature of either God or man obliges us to predicate any diversity of their purposes, so far it is to be done, but no farther. This principle must be admitted, or it must be said that we may predicate diversity and agreement without a reason, and at our own option. According then to this principle, the question is this: is there any known truth respecting God or man that obliges us to say that we cannot reason from the purposes of the human mind to those of the divine; that God may not, as man does, purpose different and opposite events in different respects or for different reasons -- anything which obliges us to say that God as a moral and providential governor may not or cannot purpose obedience and disobedience to his law, in the same sense or manner, and for the same diverse reasons in which man in these relations is ever regarded as purposing these different and opposite events? I leave this question to be answered by those who adopt the opposite view.

5. The consequences of denying our principle and of the course taken by those who deny it.

Some of the consequences of denying the principle I have adverted to, such as that it puts an end to all reasoning respecting God and his character. To this it may be added, on the supposition that we may reason on the subject, that it authorizes any premises and any conclusions. We have no knowledge of truth by which to test the premises; none to forbid the most monstrous conclusions. Whether God be benevolent or malevolent, just or unjust, sincere or insincere, fearful

as are consequences of doubt on these points, we have no means of deciding. Without regarding him as the subject of those acts or states of mind which in kind are the same which under these names we ascribe to men, what are the things meant when these terms are applied to God? Any thing or nothing. Besides, purposes are what they are, as right or wrong, good or bad, just or unjust, according to the reasons in view of which they are adopted. If we deny this in respect to God's purposes -- what can we know or believe in respect to them? Any thing or nothing.

But what is the course of our opponents? While they deny to us the right of reasoning from the purposes of the human mind to those of the divine, they do and must adopt this mode of reasoning themselves. They tell us, for example, that God purposes sin as the necessary means of the greatest good. Suppose I deny the possibility of this, as they do the possibility of the truth of my position; how can they show it to be possible that God or any being can purpose any event or this event for such a reason? Solely by appealing to the phenomena of our own minds. How came they to know that a purpose may respect its object, as the necessary means of greatest good, rather than as the necessary means of greatest evil? Plainly they never could have obtained the idea itself which their language expresses, except by, their own mental operations. While then they reason on this principle, how do they apply it? They apply it to prove, and this by their own concessions, that what they call benevolence, justice, truth, mercy, and sincerity in God, are not what these terms designate in men! Here then we may ask, what do they mean? The answer is, nothing. But this is not all. They apply it, as can easily be shown, to prove that what is esteemed malevolence, injustice, insincerity, falsehood, cruelty in men, is benevolence, justice, truth, sincerity, and mercy in God!

I am then fully authorized to assume that if man may, for different reasons or in different respects, purpose different and even opposite events, God MAY also.

Suppose then a wise and good man agitating the question whether he

shall enter the marriage state: suppose him to know that if he enters this state, he shall become the father of children whose highest usefulness and happiness he shall greatly desire: suppose him to know that his children will be sons, and that to give them a liberal education at a public seminary would result in their highest conceivable usefulness and happiness, provided they should maintain in every respect a virtuous deportment during the period of their education: suppose now that much as he desires their exemplary conduct, the parent knows that placed in these circumstances, these sons will, beyond his power to prevent it, be led into a temporary course of gross iniquity: suppose, however decisive and strong as the reasons are to regret their misconduct, that nevertheless greater evil would result from any other course of education or way of life than from this, while he can also counteract in such degree the appropriate consequences of their vices, and bring so much good out of the evil, that the actual result will be immeasurably greater good than he can accomplish by remaining single, or by placing his sons in any other possible circumstances: -- now it is easy to see what would be the purposes of such a man, and how perfectly consistent they would be with each other and with the principle of true benevolence.

Let us apply the example to the illustration of the foregoing propositions.

1. To the first proposition.

It is obvious that such a parent would prefer a married to a single life, and the education of his sons to any other means of their usefulness and happiness in his power, because both events are the necessary means of the greatest conceivable good in the case, and because, though the highest conceivable good will not, yet the highest degree of good which he can happily secure will be, the actual result.

So God may purpose a system of moral government, i.e., to create moral beings with a given constitution and to place them in given circumstances under such a government, rather than to adopt any other means of good,

because though such a means will not result in the highest conceivable good, it is still the necessary means not only of the highest conceivable good, but also of the highest degree of actual good which he can secure. For in the first place, it may be a very strong reason for adopting such a system, and other things being equal, it may be a decisive reason for adopting it, that it is the only means of the highest conceivable good. Not to adopt such a system might prove a source of great self -- dissatisfaction, since he would not do what he could to put it in the power of creatures to secure their highest happiness; and though from the nature of the system it is within the power of creatures to prevent, and though they should actually prevent, through their own disobedience, the result preferred by their Creator, still there would remain to him one substantial ground of self-satisfaction. For were we to suppose the amount of actual good to others from some other system equal to that which results from this, still the fact that this only is fitted to secure the highest conceivable good, would be a decisive reason for adopting it, since in this case its author would have the happiness of reflecting, not only that he had secured as much actual good to others as he could secure in any way, but had also adopted that system which was perfectly fitted to secure the highest conceivable good. Other reasons might also exist for adopting such a system, viz., to evince his benevolence and thus to support his authority as a moral governor. But secondly, such a system God would prefer to every other because it would actually result in the highest degree of good which he can secure. This system then would have a double recommendation, viz., that it is fitted to produce the highest conceivable good, and also will result in the highest degree of actual good which God can produce. More decisive reasons for adopting it cannot be conceived.

2. In regard to the second proposition, it is obvious that the parent would prefer that his sons should practice virtue in every instance instead of perpetrating crime, because the former would be valuable or good in itself, and also the only means of the highest conceivable good in the case.

In like manner God may be supposed to prefer holiness to sin in every

instance in which sin takes place, i.e., to purpose holiness rather than sin in its stead as good in itself and as the only means of the highest conceivable good.

3. In regard to the third proposition --

It is obvious that the parent would purpose the existence of the vices of his sons, and prefer it to the non-existence of that system from which they are inseparable. According to the case supposed, the vices are not the necessary means of the greatest good, since virtues in their stead would result in greater good. They are however unavoidable so far as the power of the parent is concerned, if he would secure the greatest actual good which he can secure. Now as he knows these vices will take place as the consequences of what he does if he adopts the course supposed, he purposes in this sense that they shall take place; and to say this in this sense, would accord with the common usage of language. This purpose also implies a preference that these vices should take place, when their existence as a necessary consequence of the best system is compared with the nonexistence of that system.

Thus God may be said to purpose sin, i.e., to purpose that it shall be and to prefer that it should be. Here however we should fix our thoughts on the respect in which God may be said to have such a purpose in regard to sin. He does not then purpose its existence as good in itself; for by the supposition it is wholly evil in its nature, tendencies, and relations: not as the necessary means of the greatest conceivable good, for holiness is by our suppositions the means of the greatest conceivable good. In what respect then can God purpose the existence of sin? I answer, he purposes that it shall be as; he purposes that system, or to do that -- from which he knows it will follow as a consequence, and he prefers that it should be, rather than not adopt that system.

The propriety of saying that God purposes sin in such a case and in such a sense, cannot be doubted. Nothing is more common when one designs

a given action or course of action, knowing the necessary consequences, to regard him and to speak of him as designing those consequences. It were easy to show that the Scriptures abound in this use of language.

In Proverbs, vi. 8-36, to hate wisdom, knowing death to be the consequence, is said to be loving death, i.e., choosing it. An example may be given from common life. The good of a community requires the erection of a mill and a dam; but the water overflows and destroys my neighbor's land, and I knew that it would do so. He charges me with designing it, and it may be said and would be said, that knowing the consequences, I did design it or purpose it. But is this a malevolent or benevolent purpose? Plainly the latter. A thousand similar cases might be given to illustrate the principle that a man is considered and said to design or purpose every known consequence of his actions. Otherwise no proof from action of intention is impossible. Whether the action admits of a good intention or not, still it is regarded as designed or purposed for some reason. It is not in the above case to injure my neighbor, but as incidental to that which was the means of public good. To show that this language is authorized by usage, how natural in such a case would be the following dialogue: Says A to B, "You have erected that dam to destroy my fine meadow, and you meant (purposed) to injure me." "Oh, no," says B, "I did not mean-my object was not to overflow and destroy your meadow." "But you did," says A, "it was your object; for you knew if you built the dam it would be so." "True," says B, "I knew it would be so." "But," says A, "did you know it would be so and yet not mean it should be? Can you thrust a dagger into my heart, knowing that it will kill me, and say you did not mean to kill me?" "Why, no," says B, "but then I did not wish to injure you, that was no part of my purpose." "But," says A, "how could you know that the meadow would be spoiled if you built the dam, and yet not mean to injure me by doing it?" "Why," says B, "the end for which I built the dam was the public good, and if I could have secured this and not injured you, I should have been glad of it with all my heart." "No," says A, "you knew the meadow would be spoiled, and yet constructed the dam, knowing this; and you meant it should be so, and that I should be a sufferer."

It is most easy to see that this controversy is founded wholly in words, and that the only reason why the controversy can be perpetuated is because the words meant, purposed, &c., may, according to usage, be applied to that which is a known consequence of what anyone does? It is from this fact only that A's charge has any plausibility. For make now the distinction between purposing an event as the known consequence of what one does, and as an event which he regards as desirable either as good or the means of good to himself, and there could be no plausibility in the reasons assigned by A as a proof of B's unkind design.

The purpose of God that sin shall be, and the preference which the purpose implies, by no means alters the nature or tendency of sin. It is in no respect a better thing in its nature or tendency, because God cannot prevent its occurrence in the best system; for man can prevent it by personal holiness, and holiness in man when compared with sin and viewed as the act of man, is as far preferable to sin in the divine mind, as that which tends to the highest conceivable good is preferable to that which tends to the destruction of all good and the production of absolute misery. Nor is sin the better because God can counteract its proper tendency and bring good out of it; for this neither makes it good in itself nor good as the necessary means of good, since there would be more good without it if man would do what he can to prevent it. There would be more good without it than with it in every instance, if God could prevent it in the precise circumstances in which it will take place. But he cannot. While therefore God, like the parent in the example given, prefers in the most unqualified manner holiness to sin, and while universal and perfect holiness on the part of men in their circumstances would result in the highest conceivable good, and while by holiness on their part no purpose of God whatever would be painfully defeated or crossed, but God's will would be done, still as God is under the necessity either of not adopting that system which is the only means of the highest conceivable good, as well as of the highest amount of good which he can possibly secure, or of adopting that system with the existence of sin as its certain consequence, he may be said, having adopted the system, to purpose the existence of sin. So that as God is not disappointed or crossed by the existence of sin, neither would he be painfully crossed by the existence of holiness.

Sin then, on the present hypothesis respecting its existence, is an event which God has in one respect purposed shall take place and prefers should take place; and this in perfect consistency with an unqualified preference in another respect that it should not take place. For what two purposes are more perfectly consistent with each other in the same mind, than a preference for right action on the part of others and a purpose of wrong action on their part, differing in the respects now supposed? What parent does not know that if his children live to years of accountability they will do wrong, and yet what parent does not prefer that they should in every instance do right? and yet what parent does not prefer at the same time the existence of wrong action in the case rather than to prevent it by the murder of his offspring?

What legislator in giving a system of laws to subjects, doubts whether there will be frequent instances of transgression, and knowing this, does not by the act of giving law (for where there is no law there can be no transgression) design that transgression shall be rather than not adopt a course which the general good demands? And yet who supposes that these facts are any proof that he does not prefer obedience to his laws in every instance? Whoever thought that discrepancy pertained to such purposes in a civil governor, or supposed that to prove his sincere preference for obedience to law, he must either give no law or resort for the prevention of crime to the indiscriminate massacre of his subjects?

So God's unqualified preference of holiness to sin is perfectly consistent with that purpose that sin shall be, and preference that it should be, which has now been supposed. Were he to resort to the necessary means of preventing sin in any case in which it does or will exist, greater evil would result from the change in the circumstances which would be requisite, than from permitting it to take place in present circumstances; for according to our hypothesis, greater good will be the actual result of the present system than would result from any change in it or from not adopting it.

PART II. -- OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

1. To suppose that the highest conceivable good is impossible with God, is inconsistent with omnipotence -- 2. God could have prevented some sins which he has permitted, and thus caused a less amount of sin -- 3. The theory requires that less than the highest conceivable happiness should exist, and less glory to God -- 4. Also that the glory of God as a moral governor should be diminished, so far as this depends on the obedience of his subjects.

THE following objections maybe made against the views maintained in the preceding discussion

1. It may be said that the greatest conceivable good is possible with God; that so far as it can be supposed to depend on the prevention of sin, as an omnipotent being he must be able to prevent it; and that it is highly dishonorable to God to suppose otherwise.

The question is not, whether it be possible for God to prevent sin. This he might certainly have done by not creating moral beings who are beings capable of sinning. But the question is, whether it may not be impossible on the ground that it may involve a contradiction, that God should give existence to free moral agents and prevent all sin. Or thus, whether if it, be possible for an agent to sin, it may not be impossible to prevent his sinning. I am aware that in the estimation of some, such an inquiry savors strongly of irreverence and presumption. I must however be allowed to ask, whether it is not equally irreverent and presumptuous to affirm that God could have prevented all sin in his accountable creatures but would not; or that a moral universe comprising the endless guilt and woes of hell is more desirable to a benevolent God, than one in which the purity and joys of universal holiness should reign without measure and without end? Surely it were no very palpable dishonor to God, to suppose him to prefer the universal holiness and consequent perfect happiness of his

moral creatures, and that he should do all he can to secure such a result, and yet that some would rebel.

I here wish it to be distinctly noticed, that I do not affirm that God could not prevent all sin in a moral system, but simply that its prevention in such a system may be impossible to God. I shall have occasion further to consider this topic hereafter, and propose therefore briefly to reply to the present objection by showing that --

It cannot be proved that God could give existence to free moral agents and prevent all sin.

It will then be admitted that there are but two possible sources of argument on this point, viz., facts and the nature Of moral agency. But facts furnish no evidence; for there is no instance in which there is a known certainty That sin will not exist in moral creatures, which certainty may not depend on the system with which all the sin that exists was certainly connected.

I ask, who can show that the continued holiness of elect angels and redeemed men does not depend on the identical system from which sin, in respect to divine prevention, is inseparable? Now it will be admitted that the system remaining exactly the same, i.e., the nature and circumstances of the beings remaining the same, all the sin which has taken place certainly would take place. The principle that the same causes or antecedents, in the same circumstances will be followed with the same effects or consequents, our opponents admit. It is then a matter of absolute demonstration, that to prevent the sin there must have been some change in the system in which it has taken place. But who can determine all the consequences of even the least change in the system? Even supposing God to leave done that which would leave prevented the sins of one individual, who can affirm that the requisite interposition for the purpose had not resulted in a vast increase of sin in the universe, even in the apostasy and augmented guilt of the individual himself?

Such is the universal attraction which unites the worlds which are scattered through infinite space in one system, that the annihilation of a single particle of matter would instantly cause some change throughout the material system; nor can it easily be told how long before the whole would rush to chaos.

Who can say that had God changed the moral system in one iota, that all heaven long ere this had not been in revolt? or that the consequence of any possible change had not been universal and endless sin in all moral creatures? No one. To what purpose then, is it to allege instances of the prevention of sin under a given system of influences, to prove that God could have prevented all sin under some other system? Facts then do not furnish a particle of evidence that God could have secured more holiness in a moral system than he has secured.

It is often inconsiderately supposed and asserted, that if God can prevent one moral being from sinning, he can another and all. This mode of reasoning, conclusive as it may be in respect to physical phenomena, has obviously no application to the actions of free moral agents. The very interposition which would be requisite to prevent the sin of one, might become the occasion of a universal and hopeless revolt.

I now remark, that the nature of moral agency not only furnishes no evidence that God could prevent all sin in moral agents, but precludes such evidence. It is not to be forgotten that whatever influence God may be supposed to use to prevent sin in moral agents, it must be consistent with the fact of moral agency and leave the power to sin unimpaired. How then can it be proved a priori, or from the nature of the moral agent, that he will not sin under any supposable influence, when he can do either right or wrong? These facts remain as premises to be reasoned from in the case. But what is plainer than that while these things are so, no inference can be drawn from the nature of the agent in respect to what he will do. The fact that he can do right is no proof that he will do right; for he can do wrong. And surely the fact that he can do wrong is no proof that

he will not do wrong. How then can it be proved a priori that a being who can do wrong in counteraction of all that God can do to prevent him, will not do wrong?

But this is not all. The nature of moral agency precludes all proof that God can prevent sin in a system of moral agents. For as we have conceded, although it may be true that God by a given system of influence may render it certain that some moral agents will never sin, yet it does not follow from this that he could do this by any other system than exactly that with which the sin of others is certainly connected.

In any other system of an equal number of moral agents than that which God has adopted, it may be true so far as any evidence to the contrary can be adduced, that there had been more sin than in the present. Of course it may also be true that God in that other system could not have prevented this greater degree of sin. How then can it be proved that he could have prevented it? This would be supposing that what may be true in view of all the evidence in the case, i.e., that what cannot be proved to be false, can be proved to be false.

Again: it may be true so far as any evidence to the contrary is concerned, that God has prevented sin in the present system so far as he can prevent it in any. Of course it may be true that to suppose that he could have prevented it beyond what he has, would be to suppose that he could do what it may be true he could not do. When will it be proved that God could have done that which it may be true he could not have done?

Further: it may be true that to suppose God to have prevented sin in moral beings would involve a contradiction. For it may be true that he has done all he can do to prevent sin in these beings without destroying their moral agency. And to suppose him to prevent sin in moral beings by destroying their moral agency, is to suppose him to prevent sin in moral beings who are not moral beings.

But it may be said that God could foresee every future cause of sin, and could have so arranged events as to prevent the occurrence of every such cause: for example, he could foresee and could have prevented the existence of that particular temptation which was the cause of the sin of our first parents; and if it be supposed that some other occurrence would have led them into sin if this had not, that he could have prevented this also, and so on, and thus have kept sin out of the world -- I answer, that in preventing the occurrence of such causes of sin he must either remove or prevent every thing which can be a cause of sin, i.e., every thing of the nature of inducement or temptation, or he must not. Should he remove every such thing, he would destroy the possibility of moral action in man, since if there were no good which man could choose rather than. God, there could be no preference of God to other good; and of course no moral action would in such a case be possible. Should he on the other hand not remove or prevent every such cause of sin, then he would leave that which might in the event prove the cause of sin beyond his power of prevention. If it here be said that he might have permitted some inducement to sin to remain, yet so trivial in itself and so nearly nothing compared with the inducements to holiness that it should in no instance prove the occasion of sin -- I answer, that the objector does not know nor can he prove that it could be done. For how can he know or prove a priori, that a being who can sin will not sin, however trifling the inducement? The susceptibilities of man to good, be the source of that good what it may, or the degree of good which he is capable of deriving from it what it may, are capable of indefinite excitement, or of such as shall prove the occasion of sin; and how such a being will act depends more directly on the degree of excited propensity toward an object than on the real or comparative value of the object. If it be said that God might have given different susceptibilities to man -- I answer, that this supposition only turns us back to a similar alternative to that just stated, viz., that man's susceptibilities must be such that he can or that he cannot sin. If he cannot sin he cannot be holy; and if he can sin who can prove a priori that he will not?

Besides, facts are altogether against the theory of the objectors; for both angels and men have sinned in circumstances in which the inducements

to sin were comparatively slight. It was certain beforehand that they would sin in these circumstances, and that God could not have rendered it certain that they would not sin, for this would involve the absurdity of rendering the sin certain and not certain at the same time. How then can it be proved that by any change of circumstances such beings would not sin? If insignificance of motive would render the prevention of sin certain, why did it not in these cases?

After all, the objector may still insist that the supposition that God could not prevent all sin in a moral system is highly dishonorable to God -- it is to limit the Holy One of Israel. I answer, it is not dishonorable to God to suppose that he cannot accomplish contradictions; that he cannot perform impossibilities in the nature of things; nor is it dishonorable to God to suppose that it may be impossible to him to do what may involve a contradiction. And I challenge any one to show that it is not an impossibility -- that it would not in fact involve a contradiction to suppose that God could prevent all sin in free moral agents. Such as we have shown may be the fact. Our opponents cannot show that it is not. Must we then, to honor God, assert that he can do that which for aught can be shown to the contrary, may involve contradiction and absurdity? Is God to be honored by the assertions of mere ignorance? Is it essential to render him that homage which is his due, that we assert that to be true of him which for aught that can be shown to the contrary may be utterly false?

It ought here to be further remarked, that such a view of the subject does in no respect limit the power of God. In the assertion that it may be impossible that God should prevent all sin in a moral system, I refer merely to an impossibility which may exist in the nature of things, and of course not to the want of any conceivable power in God; to an impossibility to which power bears no relation, and with which it has no concern. If greater power existed it would not remove the supposed impossibility, and to talk of the want of power or a limitation of power in God as the reason why he does not prevent sin, is, on the present supposition, like talking of a limitation of his power as the reason why he does not make a part equal to the whole.

But further, if it still be insisted that my supposition does limit the power of God, so does the theory which I oppose, and in precisely the same manner. It supposes thwart God cannot secure the greatest good without the existence of sin. On both schemes there is an impossibility involved, and an impossibility founded in the nature of things. And why is it more dishonorable to God to suppose an impossibility resulting, from the nature of moral agency, than to suppose all impossibility resulting from the nature of sin? Why is it more dishonorable to God to suppose that he cannot prevent a free agent from sinning, than to suppose that he cannot produce the greatest good without sin? Why is it more dishonorable to supposed, that God cannot do what it may be true is impossible in the nature of things, than to suppose that that may be true or is true which cannot be true, viz., that sin is better than holiness?

Once more: the theory opposed dishonors God not only by limiting his power, but according to a concession which must be made, by limiting his goodness. If it be true that the more holiness the more happiness, as I shall attempt to show hereafter, then God, who according to the theory opposed could produce universal holiness, could also produce universal happiness, or more than he has produced, but would not. But it is essential to the perfect goodness of any being that he produce all the happiness he can produce. How directly then and unequivocally does the theory now opposed impeach the goodness of God!

It is then an assumption wholly gratuitous, that God could have prevented all sin and secured universal holiness in a moral system -- an assumption far more dishonorable than the supposition that he could not, and a mere supposition is all that I now present, and all that my purpose in the present discussion requires.

Obj. 2. It may be said that God could have prevented at least some sins which he has not prevented, and that thus there had been less sin than actually exists; as for example (for I here concede to the objector the privilege of an appeal to Revelation), if the mighty works done in Capernaum had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they had repented. I

answer, that the supposition which I have made does not imply that God could not have prevented each and every sin which has taken place or which shall take place. But it is supposed that he could not have prevented any sin which has taken place or which shall take place, in the precise circumstances of its actual occurrence; and it will be granted that it was certain that all the sin which has taken place would take place. It is further supposed that God could not have prevented all sin; for although it be admitted that he could have prevented by a change of circumstances each and every sin that has taken place, it is no proof that he could have prevented other sins in their stead. And if it be said that he could have brought sinners to repentance, and thus have prevented subsequent sins, this may be admitted; and yet the change in circumstances necessary to such prevention might have been immeasurably for the worse, since the effect might, beyond his power of prevention, have been a hundredfold more sin on the whole. Had he brought Tyre and Sidon to repentance by miraculous interposition, it might have occasioned a revolt in heaven; yea, these very individuals might have apostatized, and the result to them have been immeasurably greater evil. Indeed, had the circumstances of men and angels been such that they had continued holy to the present hour, there is no proof that the final result had not been universal sin and hopeless impenitence. It may have been, so far as God's power to secure the result is concerned, indispensably necessary to the perpetuated holiness of elect angels and redeemed men, that they should encounter exactly that degree of temptation and trial, with all its results and circumstances, through which they and their ruined companions shall have passed. It is therefore supposable not only that God could not have kept all sin out of his moral creation, but that to have changed the circumstances of men or angels in the least respect would have resulted in immensely more sin than has resulted from their actual circumstances.

Obj. 3. It may be said that according to the theory now advanced, less happiness than the highest conceivable will exist, and that therefore less glory will accrue to God from his works than the highest. I answer, that the glory that will accrue to God from his works depends not on the degree of happiness actually secured, but on the fact that he has secured the greatest amount which he can secure. Now, according to our

supposition, God has done all he could do to secure the greatest conceivable good, and this so far as it depends on the agency of creatures; and not only so, but he has done that which will secure the greatest actual good which he can secure. And in what way could God make a fuller display of his benevolence -- in what way appear more glorious? Must he secure more good than he can secure to make a perfect display of his benevolence, and to bring to himself the highest degree of glory?

But, says the objector, if according to the present theory creatures had done what they ought to have done and could have done, there would have been more holiness and more happiness, and thus greater glory to God: I ask how? In that case God had done no more than he has now done, and as the degree of his glory depends on what he does in manifestation of his benevolence, and as he would have done nothing to manifest his benevolence in that case which he has not done already, the degree of his glory could have been no greater.

If for the sake of giving force to the objection, the objector should suppose another being able to secure and actually securing the highest conceivable happiness, and ask whether such a being would not be more glorious in consequence of such a result, than the God whom I suppose, I answer, undoubtedly. But why? Because he would show himself possessed of power which does not belong to the latter, and not because he would show himself possessed of greater benevolence; for to secure the highest happiness the latter shows himself disposed if he could, and the question wholly respects his glory as this consists in the display of his benevolence. Besides, the objection proceeds on a supposition which is inadmissible, viz.: that greater power may pertain to another than that which I suppose to belong to God; for the present theory implies that infinite or the greatest conceivable power cannot prevent sin in the moral creatures of God. Of course his glory cannot be diminished by the fact that he does not display greater power. Indeed the greater power supposed in the objection is power to effect impossibilities, which can add nothing to the glory of one who is supposed to possess it.

But I ask the objector, on what ground or principle the highest glory accrues to God, according to his scheme? He says, on the principle that God produces the highest conceivable good. I then ask, how does he secure this result? And here he must admit that he does not secure it by the perfect holiness of creatures, and of course that the glory of God suffers in this respect as much on his scheme as on mine. But he will say, God produces the highest conceivable good, by the existence of sin, which is the necessary means of that good. But I ask, why does this bring the highest glory to God? He says, because he produces the greatest good that can be produced. But I ask again, why does producing the highest degree of good that can be produced, bring to him the highest glory? The only answer is, because he produces all the good he can produce; for it is plain that if we suppose him to produce all the good he can, and other agents to add to that amount, this would not add to his honor or glory. So that on the objector's scheme as well as on mine, the highest glory accrues to God on the principle that he secures all the good he can. On this point the only difference between his is, whether the highest conceivable good is possible to God, though we may differ so far as the present objection to my theory is concerned. And on the supposition that the highest good is not possible to God, which is implied in my theory, I only ask who can imagine the glory of God to be the less because he does not secure it, i.e., because he does not perform impossibilities?

Obj. 4. It may be further said, that God as a moral governor is glorified by the intelligent voluntary homage of obedience to his law on the part of subjects, and that so far as such obedience does not exist, so far his glory is diminished. In reply, I would remark, that this objection differs from the former in assigning a different reason why the highest glory does not accrue to God according to the present theory, the former assigning the diminution of happiness, the latter the diminution of the homage of obedience. In answer to this objection, I would say that while it is to be admitted that the obedience of subjects honors God as a lawgiver, it is also true that equal honor or glory accrues to him in this character from the execution of the penalty on transgressors, or from sustaining his authority in any other way. Now as all the honor or glory of God as a moral governor depends on the simple fact that his authority is

sustained, and as this is the only respect in which they can be affected by the obedience or disobedience of subjects, so if they, disobey and thus do what they can to dishonor him, he has the remedy in his own power. He can still sustain his authority either by punishment or in some other way, as he pleases. And since to sustain his authority by his own acts is equally honorable to him as to sustain it by the obedience of subjects, disobedience cannot lessen his authority, and of course cannot lessen his glory.

PART III. -- ADDITIONAL OBJECTIONS.

5. According to this theory God cannot be as happy or blessed as If there were no sin. -- 6. That sin to the necessary means of the greatest good is proved decisively on two grounds. -- Otherwise God could not purpose its existence. -- By mercy he can produce greater happiness than had there been no sin -- 7. A high degree of temptation necessary to the highest degree of holiness, and of course to the highest happiness; and this is the reason why God has permitted sin.

Obj. 5. It may be said that according to the present theory, God cannot be as happy as he would be were there no sin.

Ans. This depends on what according to the present theory would be, were there no sin, or on what the non-existence of sin necessarily involves. And here it is obvious, that according to the present theory the non-existence of sin involves either the non-existence of the present system or the prevalence of universal holiness. If the objection contemplates the non-existence of the present system, then it has not the shadow of plausibility. For, according to our theory, the very reason why God prefers that sin should be rather than not be, is that its prevention by him involves the non-existence of the present system. And surely God cannot be rendered unhappy by the being of that which, all things considered, he prefers should be rather than not be. If God prefers that sin should be and purposes that it shall be rather than not create that system from which it will unavoidably to himself result, he cannot be unhappy that he did not prevent the sin, by not creating the system.

But I ask the objector on what scheme he can show that God is as happy as he would be were there no sin? His answer is, that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good, and is therefore, all things considered, really desirable, and of course cannot lessen the happiness of God. But the theory now maintained assigns as good and sufficient a reason why the existence of sin does not lessen the happiness of God compared with its non-existence. According to the objector's theory, God purposes the existence of sin, rather than its non-existence because it is the necessary means of the greatest good. But if God can purpose the

existence of sin rather than its nonexistence on any other account or for any other reason than as being the necessary means of the greatest good, then its existence will be equally remote from impairing his happiness. But as we have shown, an event which is neither good in itself nor good as the necessary means of good, may be truly purposed of God on another account, viz., that it is to him unavoidably incidental to that which is the necessary means of the greatest good. Sin then, viewed as thus incidental to the best system, would be as truly purposed of God, all things considered, as were it the necessary means of good. There is therefore as good a reason assigned why the happiness of God is not impaired according to the theory now maintained, as according to that which is opposed to it. Indeed the general reason is the same according to both theories, viz., that the existence of sin, the non-existence of which would impair his happiness, is truly desirable, all things considered. This must, it would seem, settle the question. For it is conceded that the happiness of God depends on the fact that all things are as he purposes they shall be, all things considered. The specific things given as the supposed reason for willing the existence of sin are indeed different: the thing considered in the one case being the relation of sin to good as the necessary means of it, and the thing considered in the other being the existence Of the best system.

But it may be said that according to the present theory, if the non-existence of sin be supposed to involve the existence of perfect and universal holiness under the present system, then God would be more happy than he now is. I answer, that so far as God's happiness depends on or results from, or is any way affected by the moral conduct of creatures, he would unquestionably derive more happiness from their holiness than from their sin; and would therefore, as the present theory maintains, greatly prefer their holiness under the present system to their sin. It is further admitted that there is no sense whatever in which God can be properly said to derive happiness from the existence of sin, any more than a benevolent physician derives happiness from the disease which he cures; although it be true that he can bring good out of the evil, and that the only proper and legitimate consequence of it to him is an actual and great diminution of his happiness. Nor can this conclusion be avoided according to the scheme of our opponents; for they maintain that

sin is truly contrary to the divine will; that God is exceedingly displeased with it; that he abhors it as the worst of evils, &c., &c. But how can this be and yet God be as well pleased with sin as with holiness? Say what they will of it as the necessary means of the greatest good, if they also say as they do, that it is contrary to his law or his revealed will, then it is contrary to a real preference or choice of God; and it belongs to them as well as to us to show how the will of God can be violated and he be perfectly happy. If they say he can be, then they have answered their own objection to our theory. If they say his law is not an expression of a real preference of holiness to sin, it is asserting that God has given no law. If they say that this will or preference of God cannot be violated without impairing his happiness, then they admit our conclusion; viz., that so far as the happiness of God depends on the moral conduct of creatures, his happiness is greatly impaired by their sin compared with what it would be were they holy.

This objection may be presented in another form. It may be said that according to the present theory, God must be defeated or crossed in some of his purposes, and thus his happiness must be impaired; for that a being should be really crossed in his purposes without suffering that which is disagreeable to him, or that which is contrary to joy and happiness—even pain and grief -- is impossible. In proof of this it may be further said, that as God, according to the present theory, prefers holiness to sin in man, and also purposes the existence of sin, it must follow that if holiness does not and sin does take place, his preference of holiness to sin is crossed, and that if holiness does and sin does not take place, his purpose that sin shall take place is crossed; and that as either sin or holiness must take place, God must be crossed in some of his purposes and thus be made unhappy.

This objection thus stated, is presented with so much plausibility derived from the form in which it is put, that I choose to examine it as thus presented. I answer then in the first place, that God is not and cannot be painfully crossed in his purpose that sin shall be, by the non-existence of sin and the existence of holiness. God's purpose that sin shall be, and his preference that it should be, are in view of its inseparable connection with

the best system; i.e., he prefers the existence of sin to its non-existence, as i the latter involves the non-existence of the best system. The real object of desire and preference then-that is, the good thing on which the happiness of God depends and in view of which he forms the purpose that sin shall be, is the existence of this system. If therefore the system exists, God is not painfully crossed, whether the consequence be holiness or sin in creatures. It is true, if sin did not follow he would be in one sense disappointed; that which he know would follow as the consequence of the system, would not in fact follow. Still, in such disappointment there would be nothing painful, since all that is necessary to the full gratification of his purpose respecting sin is, that the given system exist.

But, says the objector, if sin does not take place, God is not only disappointed in the unimportant respect now admitted, but his purpose that sin shall take place is certainly defeated and crossed; and how can this be and he not be unhappy on this account? I admit that if sin does not take place, his purpose that it shall, is in one respect defeated and crossed; i.e., the thing purposed does not take place. But the question is whether, if this were to be so, it would mar the happiness of God at all? Whether it would or not depends wholly on another question, viz.: whether in regard to the real reason or object of the purpose he is or is not gratified; for if the object of the purpose is secured, there can be no unhappiness resulting from the defeat of the purpose in any other respect. Here then is the turning-point. Now I readily concede that if God purposes that sin shall take place, either because he esteems it good in itself or as the necessary means of good, then if it does not take place, he must be painfully crossed and defeated in his purpose. But on the other hand, if he does not purpose that sin shall take place in either of these respects, i.e., if he does not purpose it either because it is good in itself, or because it is the necessary means of good, but purposes it in view of good which does not depend on the existence of sin, then he is not painfully crossed if sin does not fake place. How can he be? There is in sin nothing that is good or desirable in any respect or sense whatever. It is neither good in itself nor good as the necessary means of good; he does not so esteem it. And I ask in what other respect any thing was ever esteemed or called good? But according to the present theory, God has

not purposed sin as good in either of these respects now specified, and of course has not purposed it as good in any respect whatever. How then can he be painfully crossed, if in the present system sin does not take place? The reason then why God is not and cannot be painfully crossed by the non-existence of sin in the present system is obvious, and is this, viz.: he does not purpose sin in view of any good dependent on its existence. He purposes sin only for the sake of the present system, of which it is to him an unavoidable consequence. If then this system exists, all that exists which he regards as desirable in forming the purpose respecting sin. But the system does exist, and whether sin or holiness follow, God cannot be painfully crossed in any purpose respecting the existence of sin. In the amputation of a limb, would the patient be painfully crossed by the disappointment of suffering no pain?

I now proceed to examine the other part of this objection. It is said, that if holiness does not exist, God according to the present theory is painfully crossed in his purpose or preference that it should exist. Here then I admit (nor can I well suppress the pleasure I feel in uttering what I regard as truth so honorable to God and so important to man) that God, so far as his happiness is or can be effected by the moral conduct of his creatures, is painfully crossed in his purpose respecting holiness by the existence of sin in the present system. According to the theory which I advocate, God purposes that sin shall be and prefers that it should be rather than not create and Perpetuate the present system; and this is the only reason of his purpose respecting sin. Since therefore the system does exist, there cannot be a reason why he prefers sin to holiness in the present system. On the contrary he must, so far as his happiness is or can be affected by the moral conduct of creatures, prefer holiness to sin in the present system. Nor is it necessary, speaking in the manner in which usage in analogous cases would authorize us to speak, to qualify this position as I do. For it is always assumed in common parlance, that when a lawgiver expresses his preference of moral action, it is in view of the manner in which such action will affect his happiness in the circumstances in which his law is given. Assuming these things then to be fairly implied, it may be said with exact truth, not that God does not purpose sin, rather than the nonexistence of the present system, but that he prefers holiness to sin -- that he has no purpose or pleasure at all that

men should sin rather than be holy -- that he would that all should be holy rather than sin -- and that he regards every transgressor with anger, with indignation, with grief; or that when holiness does not and sin does exist, God in the language of the objection is painfully crossed in his purpose.

But let not the objector triumph in this concession, as if the perfect blessedness of God were marred by the existence of sin. True it is, according to the present theory, that a source of real unhappiness to God is created by sin; of unhappiness as great as a perfectly benevolent mind can feel in view of the worst of evils. The feelings of God toward every object are such as accord with the nature of the object, and that he should have any other feelings toward sin than those now ascribed to him, would be alike inconsistent with his holiness, his benevolence, and his immutability. When sin actually exists, God would, so to speak, rather cherish these emotions than any other, in view of its nature. He would be more unhappy in any other than in these, for these are the only emotions toward sin which he can regard in himself with self-complacency.

These remarks may appear to some strange and paradoxical. The subject which they respect is one which appears to me to have claimed too little consideration from those who have attempted to develop the nature of our pleasurable and painful emotions. I cannot here digress to a discussion of this topic. I would ask however, whether it be possible that a holy, benevolent mind should feel complacency toward sin or be merely indifferent? And if not, what must the feelings of such a mind be on any scheme toward an object so hateful, except those which are opposite to joy and happiness, and which are truly spoken of as painful and unhappy? Doubtless the fitness of all such emotions to the nature of their objects and a consequent approbation of this fitness in such a mind, alleviates their painfulness; and while every such mind would prefer to be the subject of these emotions rather than their opposites in view of the object of them, still who can suppose that here is not a choice of evils or that the emotions awakened by witnessing the beauties of holiness were not immeasurably more delightful? But while I maintain that the happiness of God is affected by the moral conduct of creatures and painfully impaired by the existence of sin; while I might say that no

language can too strongly describe his painful emotions toward it when compared with holiness, even that which represents him as abhorring iniquity and shuddering at the sight of it, still it will not follow that God is not perfectly blessed according to the true import of this language.

I say according to the true import of the language. For it must be granted by my opponents, that by the perfect blessedness of God cannot be meant that which excludes every thing of the nature of regret and sorrow in every sense of the terms. It is even admitted on the scheme which I oppose, that God wills or prefers holiness to sin in themselves considered. The error is not in this statement, but in saying that also which amounts to the position that he prefers sin to holiness, by, saying that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good. Of course this will of God is crossed and painfully crossed by the existence of sin. Of course God's Perfect blessedness, if the phrase denote that which excludes every thing of the nature of regret or of painful feeling, is unavoidably impaired. In other words, God is not and cannot be perfectly blessed in this sense of the phrase. There is no avoiding this while the principle in the present objection is assumed, viz., that no being can be crossed in his purposes without painful emotion. Nor is this all. It must be admitted that sin is an evil in some respect and in some degree. But so far as it is an evil it must be regarded and felt to be an evil by that Being who views things and feels toward them as they are. And further, if the objector should insist that God is perfectly blessed to the exclusion of all painful emotion in view of sin, then again he denies the principle of his objection; and if God is in no respect made unhappy in view of evil, then this principle relieves from his objection my theory as well as his own. It will not then be pretended that God is perfectly blessed, in the sense which excludes every thing of the nature of regret or unhappiness. So far from it, that on every possible scheme it must be confessed that the perfect blessedness of God cannot be what it might be conceived to be, were there no impossibilities in the nature of things. Else why did not God create a universe of beings, each of whom should be in nature, character, and blessedness, the nearest possible image of himself? All therefore that can be meant by the perfect blessedness of God, is that degree of blessedness which is possible in view of the impossibilities in the nature of things, or the highest degree of happiness which in the nature of things

it is possible to God to secure to himself.

In this sense, and it is the only proper sense of the phrase, it is maintained that while the purpose of God in respect to holiness and sin is painfully crossed, God is perfectly blessed. For in the first place, according to this theory, sin which is a source of real unhappiness to God, is to him an unavoidable consequence of the best system. The gratification of having given existence to the best system, the best even with sin as the certain consequence, is that of having adopted the best means for the best end in his power to accomplish. God therefore must be happier in the adoption of this system than by not adopting this or any other. Though holiness does not exist, or rather though God cannot secure the existence of holiness to that degree which he prefers, still having adopted the best system that which will result in the most holiness and happiness which he can secure-God has accomplished all the good he can, and must of course be as happy as a benevolent God can be; in other words, perfectly blessed according to the true import of this language.

The principle will be seen by illustration to be one of the most familiar and universally admitted.

There is such a thing as happiness from one source, which, though it does not annihilate the attendant pain which results from another, may be such in degree, that the happiness of the subject on the whole may be far greater than if the pain were to be prevented by the necessary means of prevention; such that a percipient being would prefer that the two sources of pleasure and of pain should both exist, on account of the superior degree of pleasure from the former, which would not exist if the latter did not; i.e., in a change of circumstances. Thus the martyr who, with the earnest of heaven in his soul, rings amid the fires of persecution, though the anguish of the burning is felt, may be happier than at any previous hour of his life. Thus too the benevolent physician who feels the pain he inflicts in amputating the limb of a patient, may also feel a pleasure in performing the operation as the known means of life and happiness to

one whom he loves, which shall render it the happiest act of his life. The happiness of a benevolent being depends not merely on the happiness which exists, but greatly on the fact that he has produced it; and still more if he has produced it by direct instead of indirect agency.

So too the Divine Being in establishing the present system of things, with sin as its known consequence, may contemplate his works with higher joy than he could have known had he adopted any other system. or not adopted this, though by not adopting any system of creation he had been freed from the positive unhappiness which sin occasions him. And though he had been happier in the present system of things had holiness existed instead of sin, yet it is easy to see that in its establishment he has a source of higher happiness on the whole, than had sin been prevented by not adopting the system. At any rate God is as happy as he can be, so far as his power to render himself happy is concerned, and the deficiency of his happiness resulting from the existence of sin or nonexistence of holiness is one which he could not prevent. And I ask on what theory it may not have been so; i.e., on what theory may not the happiness of creatures be less, and of course the happiness of God less, than we can imagine he might have secured were there no impossibilities to him in the nature of things? Suppose that God had created a universe of moral beings each of whom should have been in his constitution the nearest possible image to God himself; and suppose now that each should fulfill the benevolent design of his creation, had not this been a happier universe than the present? But to have given existence to such beings might have been to produce a system the worst possible, since in the nature of things there might have been an absolute impossibility that God should prevent the fearful perversion of powers so nearly like his own. Now I ask would not God have been more happy in a universe of such exalted beings, were each to direct his powers to the production of good, than in any other? And is he therefore, on the supposition that he could not prevent the perversion of their powers, not completely blessed because he did not create such a universe? But if God, though he did not create it, may be completely blessed although such holiness and happiness as we suppose, do not exist, why may he not be completely happy in the present system, although all the good does not result from it which might, had creatures done their duty? It may be, for nothing surely

appears to show that the evil which is incidental to the present system, is not immeasurably less than would in fact have pertained to any system, and the amount of good greater than would in fact have pertained to any other which God could have established. All therefore that we can say is, that real imperfection or evil may in the nature of things, so far as his power is concerned, pertain to the creation of God. If then God has given the highest perfection to the present system which he could give, and thus secured to himself the highest happiness which he could secure, and yet there is not as much happiness in the system as there might be, and God not as happy as he might be had creatures been holy, then we are obliged to conclude, either that God cannot in the nature of things secure to himself perfect and complete happiness, or that he is perfectly and completely happy by securing to himself the highest happiness which he can secure. If it be said that according to the present theory the former is true, viz., that God cannot secure to himself perfect and complete happiness, so it is according to every other. For though we suppose sin to be the necessary means of the greatest good, yet if holiness be good in itself, God is not perfectly happy, since on this supposition there is an impossibility in the nature of things, viz., that that which is good in itself should also be the necessary means of the greatest good. Both cannot be. There is therefore real evil in the system. If the latter be true, the present objection is groundless. Here then the question turns wholly on what is meant by perfect happiness in God. If that and that only is perfect happiness in God which is the greatest that we can conceive of on the supposition that there were no impossibilities in the nature of things to hinder or prevent happiness in any degree, then God is not completely happy, for there are such impossibilities, and of course it is not within the power of God to render himself thus happy. But if the highest degree of happiness which God can secure to himself, without effecting impossibilities in the nature of things, is perfect happiness, then is God perfectly happy according to the theory now maintained. The only ground of what can be called imperfection in the happiness of God on this scheme, are the impossibilities in the nature of things; and such imperfection in his happiness is no more inconsistent with his godhead, than not to effect any other like impossibility. We might as well ask, why is not every creature as great and perfect as God himself? Not then to argue about words, we come to this conclusion, that the happiness of God, so far as it depends on the conduct of creatures, is impaired by the existence of sin, and though not in a manner dishonorable to himself, yet

really and truly impaired, while the dread responsibility which such a fact involves rests on them.

Another theory has been proposed, viz., that God can fully supply from his own resources the loss or deficiency in his happiness which is occasioned by the existence of sin, e. g., by acts of mercy in redeeming the guilty and the lost; and that therefore there is no necessity for supposing that the happiness of God is on the whole impaired by the existence of sin. To this supposition I reply, that while it would relieve the present theory from the present objection, it is obviously inconsistent with the theory in other respects, as well as with the nature of moral government. Particularly it is inconsistent with the principle, that the perfect and universal holiness of creatures is necessary to the highest conceivable good, and that God, all things considered, should prefer holiness to sin. For if God can render himself as happy by saving those whom he will save, i.e., a part of mankind, as he would have been had there been universal holiness on the part of his creatures, then since it is possible that those who will not repent should repent and be saved, and since God would be more happy than he now is should they repent, it is also possible that God should be more happy in consequence of the existence of sin, than he could be were universal holiness to exist. Hence it would follow that it is possible that sin should be the necessary means of the highest possible happiness to God, and of course that he should prefer it to holiness in its stead.

Besides, it cannot be shown that God can supply in the manner supposed the loss of his own happiness occasioned by sin; for the happiness lost to him by the existence of sin and its miseries, together with that which was sacrificed in making the requisite atonement, may overbalance that which is supposed to result from his acts of mercy, though all should be saved. It is utterly impossible so to measure and compare the happiness lost in one way with that gained in the other, as to decide that the latter can be an equivalent for the former. Indeed the contrary is capable of complete demonstration. For evidently there cannot be as much happiness on the part of creatures, if sin exists, as there would be in case of the perfect holiness of all. Perfect holiness

involves the perfect or highest happiness of its subject. Sin therefore involves a real loss to every subject. But while it is admitted that there is a peculiar happiness in acts of mercy, the amount of that happiness depends entirely on the happiness or good which acts of mercy impart, or which at least they are designed to accomplish. But it is impossible that God by acts of mercy should actually impart or design to impart more happiness to creatures than the highest, or even happiness which is equal to the highest. Of course it is impossible that God should be as happy by his acts of mercy and grace, as he would be, were all his creatures to be perfectly holy. Nor is this all. The supposition subverts the law of God as a sincere expression of his will. It implies that the perfect holiness of creatures is not necessary to the highest conceivable happiness of God, since according to the supposition it is possible for God to secure to himself an equal degree of happiness by means of sin.

What then men have done to impair God's blessedness, though their efforts have not failed to diminish it when compared with what it would have been had they done their duty, has not after all resulted in its full and appropriate consequences. God has opened to himself a new source of happiness. He has made that very conduct which is so odious in his sight, the occasion of a joy and blessedness to himself, which in this specific form he had otherwise never known. He has opened the treasures of his grace, and rejoices with new and peculiar joy in the work of delivering from sin and woe the very objects of his abhorrence -- has secured to himself and to the universe, though not the highest amount of happiness conceivable, yet the greatest possible to him to effect, and has thus, according to the only true import of the language, secured his own perfect blessedness. I need not say how remote this view of the subject is, from that which exhibits God as purposing the sin and ruin of a world as a source of higher joy to himself, than had such an occasion been prevented by perfect obedience to his perfect law. According to one scheme, God purposed and by providential arrangements secured the existence of sin, and thus plunged his creatures into ruin, that he might have the happiness and the glory of bringing them deliverance; nor could the perfect holiness and consequent perfect happiness of his creatures satisfy his infinite benevolence. According to the other, God though he purposed sin as incidental to the best system in respect to his power of

prevention, still preferred the existence of holiness to sin as the necessary means of the highest conceivable good, both to himself and to the universe; and when men had done what they could to impair his joy over the work of his hands; when they had in very deed forever shut off one source of immeasurable delight to their Maker, by revolting from his government, then he devised and adopted the grand expedient of showing mercy to them as in some degree a reparation of the loss -- the best redress of the injury of which they are the guilty authors.

But it may be further said, that in the preceding remarks it is admitted that sin is the necessary means of good, as it is the means of that happiness which God derives from his acts of mercy. I answer, that it is admitted that sin is the necessary means of that peculiar happiness which results from forgiving sin. But this does not prove that sin is the necessary means of good or happiness to God, since it may still be true that God would be happier had there been no sin. His happiness from the gratification of his benevolence might be far greater had there been universal holiness than that which now results from his acts of mercy to the guilty.

Obj. 6. It is claimed that the position that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good is capable of complete demonstration, and that therefore the theory which is now advocated must be wholly groundless.

This has been claimed on two grounds: one is, that sin actually exists, and that a perfect God could not have purposed its existence unless he had regarded it as the necessary means of the greatest good. This reasoning we have sufficiently answered by showing that God could and may have purposed sin for a very different reason. For to say that he must have purposed sin because it is the necessary means of the greatest good until it be shown that he could not purpose it for any other reason, is simply begging the question.

Another ground on which the above position has been maintained is, that

God by acts of grace and mercy toward the guilty and the lost, can produce more happiness than by acts of mere benevolence toward the perfectly holy. I have already sufficiently refuted this assertion by showing that perfect holiness secures the highest happiness of the subject. But even this is denied by our opponents. It is therefore necessary to examine the present assertion more minutely. I remark in the first place, that it cannot be proved that more happiness can be produced by acts of redeeming mercy than could or would exist were all perfectly holy. The truth of this position has been assumed on the supposed authority of Revelation, and argued also from the nature of things.

The passage of Scripture relied on is Luke, xv. 7: "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance" There is no word for "more" in the Greek. The passage is supposed to imply, that the evil escaped and the happiness obtained by the penitent sinner is a good of greater value than the happiness enjoyed by a much greater number of perfectly holy beings. By comparing this passage with Matt. xviii. 13, we see that the true rendering is, "that there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth rather than (_____) over ninety and nine," &c. The text is thus a recognition and application of the familiar truth, that a lost blessing when found, occupies the mind with joy rather than other blessings of equal or even greater value which have not been lost. This view of the passage shows that the design was not to compare and estimate the real value of the blessing found with that which had not been lost, but to show that inasmuch as to retrieve a loss is a real good, so it is a good fitted to awaken a peculiar and high degree of joy. That this is the whole import of the language is evident from the consideration that the truth taught by our Lord is illustrated by appealing to our own common experience in cases which directly contradict the supposed import of the passage. Is the owner of the lost sheep happier on the whole by finding it, than, if it had not been lost, or glad on the whole that it was lost? Is the father of the reclaimed prodigal glad on the whole that the son was lost because he is found that he was dead because he is alive again? These questions every one can answer without mistake; and the answer shows that the supposed comparison and supposed estimate are not even alluded to in the passage. It is impossible that we should be happier in

the one case than in the other, since it is a matter of consciousness, that the happiness of continued possession, had it not been interrupted, and the unhappiness occasioned by the loss, more than outweigh the happiness of finding that which was lost. I need not say how much stronger the case is when the blessings not lost are many instead of one.

But I will concede the construction put on the passage so far as to admit that it is a case of comparison in respect to the relative value of two objects. What then are the precise objects compared? Is the recovery then of the lost blessing compared with the entire non-existence of the blessing not lost, or is it compared with it merely as a present safe possession? This is a material question; for it is obvious that this blessing contemplated merely as a present safe possession, is far less fitted to awaken joy, than to think of it at the same time as having no existence. For an example, take the case of the hundred sheep. To contemplate the blessing of the ninety and nine as never possessed, and to think what it would be to be wholly destitute of it, would greatly increase its value in our estimation compared with contemplating it merely as a present safe possession. This may be seen by asking whether we should prefer the recovery of that which was lost to the past, present, and future possession of the ninety and nine? This question is easily answered by every one that knows that ninety-nine sheep are of more value than one, though the latter had been lost and found again. This shows at once, if we suppose a comparison in the case, what is and what is not the object of the comparison. It is simply on the one hand the ninety and nine contemplated as a present safe possession without taking into consideration the loss involved in their nonexistence, compared on the other with the simple recovery of that which was lost; and this too without taking into account the deduction to be made by the loss itself. So it may be safely conceded, that in a like comparison of a penitent sinner and of ninety and nine just persons, there is more joy over the former than over the latter. But if the question be, whether the existence of one penitent sinner with the evil and the good which it involves, be preferable to the existence of ninety and nine perfectly holy and happy beings, no benevolent mind can thus judge.

This brings us to the second ground of argument.

Secondly: The doctrine now questioned is argued from the nature of things. Here the estimate is commonly made in the form and even with the supposed certainty of an arithmetical computation. We have such a computation by Dr. Bellamy in his Sermons on the Wisdom of God in the permission of sin. Unfortunately however for this computation, it depends on the gratuitous and false assumption that the happiness of each sinner saved is "a hundred times greater" than it would have been had he never sinned. Nor is this all. The doctor supposes the damned to lose one degree of happiness and to suffer an increase of misery in proportion to the supposed increase of the happiness of the righteous, viz., a hundred degrees. Now here is one main item left entirely out of account, viz., the misery of the lost, which is supposed to be increased a hundred degrees. The question is, how much is this aside from the supposed increase? It is something more than the loss of one degree of happiness -- it is a great amount of positive misery -- so great that it were good for the unhappy subject not to have existed. Now the supposed loss of one degree of happiness is a balance for one degree enjoyed, and what scales has Dr. B. or any other man by which to decide how much positive misery is a balance for a given amount of happiness? Who can decide that if in one case the happiness is increased to a hundred degrees, the misery of a lost soul aside from the supposed increase is not so great an evil as not to outweigh both together.

Obj. 7. It may be said that the present system is the best, as it will result in the highest degrees of holiness on the part of the holy, inasmuch as it includes that high degree of temptation which is necessary to the highest degrees of holiness, and of course of happiness, and that therefore the reason that sin is not prevented, is not that God cannot prevent moral agents from sinning. To this I reply, first -- That if it may be so, it is also true that it may not be so, and that on this supposition there is no reason for saying that it is so, or that it may not be true that God cannot prevent sin under a moral system. Secondly: There is no proof that in all cases the degree of holiness of a moral being will be as great as the degree of temptation overcome. This may be true in some cases, particularly on the

part of those who are imperfectly holy; but how does it appear that a being who loves God with all his strength can love him more, in consequence of increased temptation and of surmounting such increased temptation? On the contrary, it is plain that in the case of a perfectly holy being, to increase temptation must lessen the degree of his holiness. Perfect holiness in a moral creature consists in loving God as much as he can love him, while he is under a necessity of loving an inferior good in some degree. At the same time, he has but a limited power or capacity of loving all objects of affection. Suppose this capacity of loving in a perfectly holy being to be the capacity of loving fifty degrees, and that being under a necessity of loving the inferior good ten degrees, he loves God with forty degrees or with perfect love. Let us now suppose the temptation to be increased, in other words, the value of the inferior good increased, so that it becomes necessary to love the inferior object fifteen degrees. The consequence is that he must love God so much the less as he loves the inferior object more, and is necessarily less holy as the consequence of increasing the temptation; that is, if the degree of his holiness is determined by the degree in which he loves God more than he loves every other and all other objects. Thirdly: Supposing the system, with the degree of temptation necessary to secure the highest degree of holiness on the part of the holy, actually to exist, and that God, by the direct exertion of his omnipotence, without any other change in the system of influence, can secure the perfect holiness and of course the perfect happiness of all, the question is, why does he not thus secure this result? Having given that perfection to the system which is requisite to secure the greatest degree of holiness on the part of those who are holy under it, can a reason be conceived or imagined why, if by the mere exertion of his power he can make all who sin perfectly holy and happy, he should not do it? Which is the most reasonable to suppose, that he cannot by his mere power prevent the sin of those who do sin without destroying their moral agency, or that he can do this and refuses to do it without any conceivable reason? If it be said that the sin of those who sin under the supposed best system is the necessary, means of the greatest good, this as we have seen is impossible. If it be said that by the supposed interposition of power the system would be changed, and changed for the worse, then I ask, how changed for the worse? Every influence supposed to be necessary to the highest degree of the holiness of those who are holy is preserved, and what the supposed interposition of power would effect, is the perfect holiness and happiness of those who

sin. And would such a change in the system be for the worse or for the better? If for the better, then why is it not adopted by perfect benevolence? If for the worse, how can this be conceived; or rather do we not know that if this view of the case is all that is to be considered, it would be for the better and not for the worse, that all were perfectly holy and happy forever? If it should now be said that the supposed interposition of power to make all holy might be for the worse, because it might result in more sin at some future period than it would prevent; but how so, if God can keep all sin out of his moral kingdom, by securing the perfect holiness of all, through the mere exertion of his omnipotence?

The present theory then not only admits that God cannot prevent all sin under the best moral system, but it does not furnish even a plausible vindication of God in not preventing by his power the existence of all sin under a moral system, forever. And further, it is plain that no theory can furnish such a vindication; for when we have supposed the most perfect system of influences conceivable, except omnipotence should secure universal and perfect holiness and happiness, the question still returns, why not so exert his Omnipotence as to secure this result? Can human ingenuity devise an answer, or even be authorized to say there can be any other reason, except that a perfect God cannot prevent all sin, even under the best conceivable system, or in other words, cannot prevent all sin forever without destroying moral agency?

APPENDIX -- No. IV:

ARE ANY OF THE PUNISHMENTS OF CIVIL LAW LEGAL SANCTIONS, EXCEPT THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH?

(VIDE LECTURE VII., SECT. I., VOL. I.)

Prevalent errors to be considered. -- All evil employed in punishment not penal sanction of supreme law -- How to decide what is the supreme law. -- Civil government does not require virtuous benevolence. -- Overt action

cognized. -- Assumption in favor of every subject. -- Reward given by the State. -- How viewed as a sanction. -- Penalty how considered as a sanction. -- Malum in se and malum prohibitum, in one respect no transgression of civil law. -- Malum in se. -- Many overt acts which are prohibited, not considered as violations of the supreme law. -- Burglary and robbery. -- Falsely assumed that civil law assigns punishment according to a just moral estimate of offences. -- Diversity In degree of penalty. -- The enactments under consideration not enforced by legal sanctions. -- Punishment of death.

BEFORE I proceed to the argument on this point, there are several errors in respect to the nature of civil law, its requirement and sanctions, which I deem it important to correct. That which I regard as the most serious, and which is occasioned by others, consists in confounding the penal sanction of the supreme law of the State, with that kind of natural evil which civil legislation employs, in the form of punishment, to prevent the violation of certain particular legislative enactments. The assumption is common, that this kind of evil, called the punishment or penalty of the particular law, is a legal sanction, and as it is employed merely as so much motive to secure conformity to the particular law or enactment, the inference is, that the same thing is true in respect to the penal sanction of the supreme law of the State, and indeed in respect to the legal sanctions of every moral government. To this error as their source, I cannot doubt that the peculiar views of the Universalist and the Infidel respecting the sanctions of God's moral government are to be traced. It is then of essential importance that we form just views of the supreme law of the civil State, if we would clearly discern the difference between this law, which as I maintain is the only law of the State that has legal sanctions, and those particular legislative enactments which have no legal sanctions.

By the supreme law of the State, I mean that law which is essential to the government of the State as a moral government, and the sum of whose requirement of every subject is disinterested benevolence to the State, or an elective preference of its highest happiness for its own sake. Or to

speaking more particularly, I mean. that law which claims disinterested benevolence to the State from every subject, on the authority of the governor or government, and which on the same ground forbids the opposite disposition or principle of action.

In deciding what the supreme law of the State or of its government ought to be, we may view every one as a distinct and separate community. It is true that every State with its government is in fact one of many great communities in the empire of God, and under his rightful dominion. Contemplating it under this aspect, and supposing its highest happiness to be inconsistent with that of the whole, the great law of benevolence to the universe would require such sacrifice of its wellbeing as would be necessary to the highest happiness of the whole. But if we suppose its highest happiness to be consistent with that of the whole, then the governor ought, without qualification, to aim to secure its highest happiness by requiring every subject to prefer this end to every other that can come into competition with it as an object of preference. This supposition, at least as a general principle, with its consequence, is undoubtedly, as it ought to be, universally assumed as just. We may therefore view the State, for our present purpose, as a distinct and independent community, and its moral governor in deciding on the supreme law, as sustaining no other or higher relation than that of the guardian and promoter of the highest happiness of this temporal community. This law must be that which we have described as requiring of its subjects disinterested benevolence to the State.

This benevolence must be distinguished from that higher principle toward God and his sentient creation which is the sum of all virtue or moral excellence. The latter is in no respect the subject of civil legislation. Civil government is indeed an ordinance of God, nothing being more manifest than that it is his will that men should exist in society, and be controlled by that influence which we call civil government, as the necessary means of their highest temporal well-being. But civil government, like the institution of marriage, respects the interests of earth and time. It is no part of the function of the civil ruler to make or to attempt to make his subjects religious by law. He has in this relation no concern with claiming

or enforcing benevolence to God or to the sentient universe. The entire function of his office is, by his authority, to bring every subject to conform to the law of benevolence to the State, and thus to secure its highest happiness as a temporal community. It is true indeed that every subject who is disinterestedly benevolent toward the State, knowing his higher relations toward God or the sentient universe, may also be so toward the latter; and he who is disinterestedly benevolent toward the latter, is so toward the former. But the civil ruler, as such, has no concern with the conduct of his subjects in this higher relation.

Again: the governor, in deciding the question of obedience or disobedience to this law, takes cognizance of overt action not indeed, as many seem to suppose, as constituting obedience or disobedience, but only as the decisive proof of obedience or disobedience to the law. This law, in the estimation of the civil ruler, is obeyed by the subject who by overt action furnishes no proof that he is actuated by the principle opposite to that which the law requires. It is disobeyed, in his estimation, by him only who shows that he is actuated by the principle opposite to that which the law requires. Hence in deciding the question of obedience or disobedience, we have this important principle:-Every subject who cannot be proved by overt action to be governed by the principle of hostility to the state, which is forbidden in the supreme law of the State, is to be considered and treated as an obedient subject: -- or thus: no subject who cannot by overt action be proved to be actuated by this principle can be considered and treated as a disobedient subject.

With these views of the supreme law of the State, we now recur to its sanctions. And first, to its reward. This may be said, in general terms, to consist in the protection of the life, liberty, and property of the obedient subject. By this I do not mean to imply that the subject of the civil law has what some call an inalienable right to life, liberty, and property, in such a respect that the State by law may not require the voluntary sacrifice of these blessings, when such sacrifice is, as it may be, demanded by the public good. Such laws may not only be made, but may in some cases be enforced by penalties which shall deprive the transgressor not only of property or liberty, but of life also. When therefore I speak of the obedient

subject, I speak of one who is obedient to law in every form which involves a spirit of loyalty to the State. The true doctrine on this subject is, that civil government is bound to the extent of its power, so far as it shall be for the general good, to protect the life, liberty, and property of the obedient subject, with every other blessing of his earthly existence.

If now we contemplate the nature of that reward, which is annexed to the supreme law of the State, and the condition on which it is conferred, we cannot fail to see its peculiar characteristic as a legal sanction. As good in itself, and as the means of good, it is obviously the highest good which a civil government can confer on each obedient subject. It is conferred solely on condition of the subject's obedience to the supreme law of the State. It is therefore a plain and unequivocal expression of the moral governor's highest approbation of obedience to this law. No subject can fail to regard it in this light; nor can he do so without considering it as a decisive manifestation of that character in the lawgiver which alone becomes him as the guardian of a nation's welfare, and which alone gives him the right to rule. He may indeed view it as so much natural good, and as such, a motive to conformity to the claim of law. But he must regard it also as something more; as that which, by manifesting the lawgiver's design to secure the highest welfare of the State, gives majesty to his law, and inspires reverence for his authority. Otherwise all that we call the majesty of law, or the authority of civil government, is reduced to a mere contract or stipulation of so much hire for so much service. But can any man of common sense view a wise and faithful administration of civil government under the simple aspect of such a contract? Is there no reason for submission to the supreme law of the State except to secure the personal benefit of the reward as the fulfillment of a contract made solely for the subject's personal advantage? Plainly, if civil government, or the supreme law which it necessarily involves, is nothing but a stipulation to confer so much good for so much good received, let it be called by its right name. To call it government or law, or to speak of its authority or of its influence as law, is to talk of what has no existence. Who is so ignorant, as not to know that the influence of law, of government, is a peculiar influence -- that when we speak of a king or moral governor as having the influence of authority, we speak of an influence which is fitted and designed to command respect and

reverence, to secure confidential and cheerful submission to his will, and to determine and enforce the obligation to obedience; an influence which emanates from the sanctions of his law, as manifesting that character which alone becomes him as the guardian and promoter of a nation's happiness; an influence which gathers around and clothes him with majesty as with a garment? Viewed under this relation, as manifesting this character in the governor, the legal reward is necessarily something more than merely so much natural good as a motive. It necessarily carries with it to every mind the conviction of that character which gives him a right to rule, and thus ratifies, sanctions his authority. Viewed in any other relation, or under any other light, it can produce no such effect. Viewed, as many are wont to view it, merely as so much natural good designed to influence only as a direct motive to secure obedience, it can sanction nothing which can be called authority; it can produce nothing which can be called obedience, and can no more be viewed as a legal sanction, than a stipulated equivalent in traffic, or than any other benefit conferred as the mere dictate of selfishness. But enough has already been said on this point. I only ask, how, without manifesting through this reward his highest appropriation of obedience to the supreme law of the State, the governor could manifest a disposition to govern in the best manner, or be regarded as doing any thing to establish or ratify his authority in the lowest degree?

I now proceed to show the same thing in respect to the penalty of the supreme law of the State, as this is distinguished from the penalties annexed to other laws. Here we have the same general error to encounter and to remove -- the error of supposing that the penalties annexed to certain particular legislative enactments, especially to those which forbid such crimes as theft, robbery, burglary, &c., have the same design and are of the same nature as the penalty annexed to the supreme law of the State -- the penalty of death.

I have already had occasion to show, with respect to the penalties annexed to some of these particular enactments, that they cannot be regarded as legal sanctions, but must be considered as simply so much direct motive in the loss of liberty or property, to deter from transgression.

And here I might ask, if the fine or pecuniary punishment imposed for the neglect of military duty, or for failure to render an annual account or list of one's taxable property, are not legal sanctions designed to sustain the authority of the government; if the transgressor in these cases is not, in the eye of the law, an enemy of the State? If these penalties are designed simply as so much direct motive to deter from transgressing the statute, why are not the same things true in respect to the short imprisonment which is the penalty for petty larceny, or the longer one for forgery, robbery, and burglary? What is there to show that the government esteems one class of these cases as involving hostility to the State rather than the other; or the penalties of one class as legal sanctions rather than the other; or that the penalties in both are not designed simply as so much motive to deter from transgressing the specified enactments? It is true, these penal inflictions differ in the degree of evil which they involve. In some cases the penalty is merely a pecuniary punishment or fine; in others, a fine and a short imprisonment; in others, a short imprisonment only; in others, a longer imprisonment, but limited to a term of years; and in others imprisonment for life. But all this is consistent with the design that each several penalty should influence, as simply so much motive to prevent transgression. At the same time, in each of these cases the essential reward of obedience, the protection of life, is secured to the subject not less than had he not transgressed the particular statute. He is still treated as obedient to the supreme law of the State. How then can he be regarded as an enemy of the State? How can the punishment be designed to express the supreme disapprobation of the government toward such a subject? What can the punishment in every such case be, except so much natural evil in the loss of liberty or property, or of both, designed simply as motive to prevent transgression?

But in order to form correct and satisfactory views of this subject, in opposition to what are deemed common errors respecting it, it is necessary to examine these errors; at least so far as to bring if possible before the mind the precise question at issue.

In respect to the transgression of civil law, a distinction has been made

between a malum in se and a malum prohibitum.

Some have maintained a difference between the two kinds of transgression denoted by this language, and others have denied it. As some however have meant one thing by this distinction and some another, the one class has not always denied what the other has maintained. Some have maintained the guilt or moral turpitude of all crimes against the State, who yet have denied that this is the ground on which the State inflicts penalties, at least in all cases. Others, with the same view of the nature of crimes against the State, have maintained that it is the ground of penal inflictions even in all cases. Others, asserting in words the guilt or moral turpitude of all such offenses, but meaning by this merely their tendency to injure the State, have maintained that the ground of all civil penalties is the guilt or moral turpitude of the conduct punished. In view of these different opinions, with no one of which am I satisfied, it is desirable if possible to expose what is erroneous, that we may the more clearly see what is true.

For this purpose I remark, that in one important sense of the language, no transgression of civil law is a malum in se. By the moralist who considers man's relations not merely to the State but to the sentient universe, and his consequent subjection to the great law of benevolence toward all, not to love one's country or the highest happiness of the State, is justly viewed as implying the selfish principle, or a principle of hostility not only to the State but to God and his sentient creation; and as such, a malum in se. There is on the part of the murderer or the traitor such a palpable violation of this great law -- there is so much moral wickedness in the case as distinguished from the mere tendency of the act to impair or destroy any mere interest of time, that it is natural to feel strongly the moral ill-desert or guilt of the transgressor, and to conclude without due reflection, that the civil penalty in the case is threatened and inflicted chiefly if not wholly in relation to such ill-desert. But as I have already shown, with the conduct of his subjects in their high relation to their Maker and his sentient creation, the civil ruler has no concern. This law does not require the subject to love the State and to seek its happiness from a principle of disinterested benevolence to all sentient being. He has

no right to require such a principle of his subjects, nor to forbid the opposite. The prohibition of the crime of blasphemy, as an offense against God, by civil law, is obviously inconsistent with religious liberty, and transcends the prerogative of the civil ruler. He can require nothing beyond disinterested benevolence to the State. The transgression of this law therefore, cannot be esteemed by him as involving the violation of the great law of benevolence toward the sentient universe, and in this sense a malum in se. It may, and for the most part probably does, involve the violation of this great law, and is, as such a violation, a malum in se. But the civil ruler can know nothing of its nature or relations in this sense. His only concern with it as a civil ruler, is as a malum in se in another relation -- in its relation to the State.

In this view of the subject the present question is not, whether he who violates any law of the State, either a law which forbids murder, or one which forbids petty larceny, or one which forbids turning to the left when meeting another on the highway, acts morally wrong in the sight of God, or in the court of conscience -- in other words, violates the great law of benevolence toward all sentient being. The civil law has no concern at all with this question. Further, the present question is not whether the executive or overt act involved in the violation of every enactment of the State tends in some limited degree to impair the well-being of the State; that it has this tendency is readily conceded. But the present question is, whether the lawgiver or moral governor of the State considers the subject, whatever law of the State he violates, as therein violating the supreme law of the State, and thus guilty of a malum in se in relation to the State. When one violates a law whose penalty is death, as the law which forbids treason or murder, the government confessedly considers him as transgressing the supreme law of the State. Does the government form the same estimate of him who violates any other law, or any law whose penalty is not death? The violation of the law which forbids treason or murder, or of any law whose just penalty is death, it is conceded is a violation of the supreme law of the State, involving a principle of action fatal to the well-being, and even to the existence of the State, and is therefore in the view of the government a malum in se in relation to the State. But is this the view which it takes of the violation of any law to which it has not annexed the penalty of death? Does it view

the executive or overt act involved in the violation of any such law as proof of a principle of hostility to the State? or does it view it merely as a *malum prohibitum* -- a violation of a rule designed by some penal evil annexed as simply so much motive to prevent the forbidden action as in some limited degree injurious to the State, and this without the least reference to, or implication of a principle of hostility to the State on the part of the violator? This is obviously the question at issue; and to show that the violation of a civil law not having the penalty of death, is not in the view of the government a violation of the supreme law of the State, is to show that it is simply a violation of such a rule of action as I have now described: to show that it is not a *malum in se* in relation to the State, is to show that it is merely a *malum prohibitum*.

I remark then, that the bare statement of the fact carries its evidence on the face of it. It is one of the most obvious and familiar facts, that the overt act forbidden by any such civil enactment as we now speak of, is not considered by the government either as the violation, or as the proof of the violation of the supreme law of the State. What civil government entitled to respect ever esteemed such an overt act as evincing the same malignant principle of action toward the State which is evinced by the overt action involved in treason or murder? The principle which refuses to perform military duty, or to turn to the right as the law directs, or which steals a melon from a garden to gratify the appetite, or a ribbon from the shop to adorn a head-dress, is not in the eye of the civil law the same that would spread anarchy and death through the State. It may be, indeed-probably often is -- in the view of God and of truth, such a principle. But the civil law -- the government of the State -- does not, nor is it authorized so to esteem it; nor does it intend that its subjects should so esteem it. Nothing plainly would be more abhorrent to the universal sense and reason of men than that it should be so considered. Nothing would more justly provoke revolution than such a practical estimate of these offenses by the government of a State. These acts then are not in the eye of civil law *mala in se* in relation to the State, but simply *mala prohibita*.

But it may be asked, is it so in respect to the violation of all this class of

legislative enactments; particularly is it so in respect to the act of robbery or of burglary? I answer by asking why it is not so in these cases? Is it that these acts involve a peculiar degree of moral turpitude scarcely less than the overt acts involved in treason and murder? Be it so; but with this the civil law has no concern. It has no right to, prohibit it or to require its opposite as such. Here lies the great imperfection of civil government compared with a moral government, administered by omniscience. It has no unerring insight into the human heart, and is therefore utterly disqualified to determine so great a question, as whether a man is benevolent or selfish in his high relations to his Maker and his sentient creation; or whether one according to this standard is a good man or a bad man. If its decisions respected this question, it would be obliged in some supposable cases to determine that to be murder which would not be murder. For who shall say that the good man (as many believe David to have been when he killed Uriah) may not, in the eye of the civil law, commit murder? If this be so, then even the crime of murder, as viewed by the civil law, does not necessarily involve the opposite of the benevolent principle toward God and his sentient creation. It can be viewed as involving at most the opposite of the benevolent principle toward the State. Benevolence toward the State as a limited affection may be perfect; that is, it may be a disposition to sacrifice every thing which can come into competition with its object -- in a mind, which in relation to the universe, is perfectly selfish -- just as benevolence in a parent, or in one of a company of highwaymen toward a limited community, may be perfect in a perfectly selfish mind. And yet such benevolence toward the State would be, and must be regarded by the government as perfect obedience to the supreme law of the State. The civil law therefore can require, in respect to the principle of action, nothing but benevolence toward the State, and this may be either that which is dictated by that higher principle of benevolence to all sentient being, or it may be merely a limited and therefore a selfish principles merely selfish benevolence toward the State. Of course civil government in annexing its penalties to the laws against robbery and burglary, and indeed against treason and murder, has no concern with the moral turpitude of these crimes. The only thing which it knows and contemplates as crime, is crime against the State; and the only crime against the State which is a *malum in se*, is one which involves a principle of action hostile to the welfare and existence of the State, and is proved to be such by overt action which tends to destroy the State. The

only question then is this -- does the overt act in robbery or burglary evince in the eye of the law this principle of hostility to the State? Does either of these crimes in the view of civil government involve the same principle of action in relation to the State, which is involved in treason or in murder? This we think will not be pretended in regard to the neglect of military duty, nor in regard to an act of petty larceny. But how does robbery or burglary differ in this respect from either of these violations of law? Only as they tend to diminish the public good in a greater though still in a limited degree; a degree however which still falls immeasurably short of that in which the principle involved in treason or murder tends to diminish it. The direct mischief of petty larceny, of robbery, and of burglary is in one respect the same -- the loss of property by its rightful possessor. Robbery and burglary in some cases may be justly regarded as tending indirectly to greater evil, especially as awakening a reasonable apprehension of the loss of life. Neither however, correctly defined, involves an intent to kill. Neither, in the view of the law, involves a principle of hostility to the State, nor is inconsistent with that benevolence toward the State which constitutes obedience to its supreme law. The law still throws its protection around the life and the property of the transgressor, thus giving to him the essential reward of an obedient subject to the supreme law of the State. It may deprive him of liberty for a term of years, or for life, and thus properly inflict upon him a severer penalty than it inflicts for minor offenses of the same class. Still he is considered and treated as essentially an obedient subject. He is not considered as actuated by a principle hostile to the welfare and existence of the State, nor as disobedient to the supreme law of the State. There is no proof, nothing which can be regarded as proof, that he is. His offense is not viewed by the government as a *malum in se* in relation to the State. The penalty he incurs is not designed as a legal sanction -- designed as a direct proof and ratification of the authority of the government. On the contrary, his offense is plainly viewed by the law simply as a *malum prohibitum*. Its punishment is designed to deter from transgression merely as so much motive. Nor is there any principle by which the civil law can form any other estimate of either of the crimes under consideration, or of any other of the same class, which would not require that it should form the same estimate of an act of petty larceny, or of neglecting to perform military duty.

But it may be said, that the violation of any law of the State involves a principle of action equally remote from a spirit of loyalty to the government, and equally hostile to the welfare and even to the existence of the State, with that involved in treason or murder. I have no occasion to depreciate the evil tendency of the principle or of the overt act involved in any of the violations of civil law. Let it then be admitted, that in a just moral estimate -- in that estimate which truth makes and which God will make -- forgery, robbery, burglary, petty larceny, and all other offenses against civil law, violate those civil rights on which the security and well-being of human society depend; that as the legitimate consequence, all industry and trade must decline, the sources of subsistence fail, the authority of law and with it the only foundation of society be subverted, and the country be deserted and reduced to desolation; that as he who is unjust in the least is unjust also in much, so he who commits any, the least offense against the State, is actuated by a principle which tends to lay waste human society and human existence; I say let it be admitted that in a just moral estimation all this is true; but the question returns, does the law does the government of the State form this estimate of things; or rather, are they authorized to form this estimate of it? Is the overt act proof of such a principle? If so, why are not all these offenses placed on a level in respect to penalty? If the object of penalty is the same, and this object is to support the authority of law, why is not the same penalty which is necessary for this purpose in one case necessary in every case? If such is the estimate of any of this class of crimes, then it is the estimate of all of them, and the petty thief and the burglar in the eye of the law, and according to the only just estimate by the civil ruler, deserve the same penalty, nay, more; he who pilfers the most trivial article from a shop-door is in the eye of the law as truly an enemy of the State and proves himself to be so, as he who betrays his country to a conqueror to be desolated by his armies. The government of course which does not visit every diversity of offense with equal penalty, even with that which is necessary to sustain its authority, is recreant to its trust. And yet, plainly no government that should do this could command the respect and confidence of its subjects, or be regarded by them otherwise than as in the highest degree oppressive and tyrannical, and as having no authority.

But the error we are opposing rests entirely on the assumption, that civil government proceeds in annexing its penalties to laws according to a just moral estimation of offenses; for in no other estimation can these offenses be equalized in their evil tendency. Viewed in their tendency to bring detriment to the State, as this tendency pertains to the overt action or to the principle involved, it is obvious that they are not equally injurious. That they are so in the tendency which pertains to overt action will not be pretended: that they are so in the tendency which pertains to the principle, is no more credible according to the mode in which civil government judges and must judge of the principles of action. It can judge of these, only as they are manifested through the medium of executive or overt action. It can decide that a principle of hostility to the State exists, only when the overt action is such as to be the decisive proof of such a principle; and they can decide that the overt action is the decisive proof of such a principle, only when the overt action cannot be accounted for by being traced to any other principle. Can then the overt acts of neglecting military duty, of pilfering from a shop, of taking a man's purse on the highway, or of entering his house by breaking a window or a door and plundering it of its plate, be traced to no other principle than that of hostility to the government and the State? Do such transgressors of law manifest the same deadly principle of hostility to the happiness and the existence of the State, as that of the traitor and the murderer? Is such the estimation of the principle formed by an enlightened civil government or community? Would not such a judgment be wholly unauthorized -- flagrantly unjust? Cannot the overt action involved in any of these minor transgressions be accounted for consistently with a principle of obedience to the supreme law of the State, from the weakness of the principle and the force of temptation? Does not every enlightened government thus account for them? Do not the penalties for such offenses inflicted by every such government place this point beyond all dispute, by showing that nothing is aimed at by these penalties except the mere prevention of crime?

Again: this view of the particular enactments is further confirmed by the diversity in the degree of their penalties, and the grounds of this diversity. Were the design of these punishments to uphold the authority of the government, no reason can be given why the same penalty should not be

inflicted, however diverse the cases. On the contrary, the most decisive reason exists why the penalty should be the same in degree in all cases; for the degree of penalty necessary to this end in one case is necessary in all cases. Instead of annexing these penalties on this principle, every wise civil government greatly diversifies them, and without the remotest reference to this principle, and entirely on other grounds. One ground is the tendency of the offense to bring detriment to the State; another is the facility with which the crime can be perpetrated; and another is the facility of escape by the perpetrator. These things are consistent only with the supposition, that the principle which regulates these punishments, is their necessity for preventing the violation of these statutes by the influence of motive only. Accordingly, in some cases the violation of one of these statutes, which is far less injurious in its direct result than the violation of another, is visited with a severer penalty. No enlightened civil government in annexing a penalty to any one of these statutes, proceeds on the principle of preventing absolutely its violation and the mischief which in a single instance it brings to the State; but is guided also by the frequency with which the violation is likely to occur, increasing the severity of the penalty as may be requisite to diminish the frequency of the offense. In some cases it even proceeds on the principle of not punishing at all, especially when the crime can be prevented by other means with greater success. In other cases these punishments are designed chiefly as reforming influences. Such are the principles which pervade the whole system of penal jurisprudence in respect to the class of statutes under consideration; and they show that their violation is not regarded by the government as a violation of the supreme law of the land or as a *malum in se* in relation to the State, but as a *malum prohibitum*; that the design of these penalties is not directly to sanction the authority and sustain the majesty of law, but merely to prevent the violation forbidden by so much motive.

Once more: these particular enactments are not enforced by any thing which can be properly called legal sanctions. No reward whatever is promised to obedience to this class of enactments, either directly or indirectly, which can be properly called a legal sanction. It cannot be said that the protection of life, liberty, and property is made to depend on conformity to any one of them, for the subject who disobeys any one of

them is entitled to this reward in every substantial respect. He is as fully protected in respect to his life, the essential legal reward of obedience to the law of the State, as had he not transgressed the statute; while he is deprived of liberty, or property, or both, only in some limited degree, which is requisite to create a suitable motive to obedience. The degree of liberty or property which he loses by transgression, is all that he would possess and enjoy by obedience, and all that can be called the reward of obedience in the case. But this merely cannot be regarded as sufficient to give, nor as designed to give authority to the law of a State. It cannot have nor be supposed to have any other influence than that of so much motive to secure obedience, and therefore cannot be a legal sanction. That reward which has the influence of a legal sanction is given, in every substantial respect, to the transgressing subject. It is given virtually, given in principle, so given to every subject, that he is truly esteemed a rewarded subject who, whether he has violated one of these particular enactments or not, cannot be proved to have violated the supreme law of the State. Every other subject is considered by the civil law as an obedient subject, and rewarded accordingly. Unless he can be proved to have violated this law, he is considered and treated as an obedient subject, whatever other law he may have violated. Obedience therefore to any one of these enactments receives no reward which can be called a legal sanction. Again: no one of these enactments is enforced by any punishment which can be properly called a legal sanction. This will not, we think, be pretended in respect to those whose penalties consist in some slight pecuniary punishment, or even in a few weeks of comfortable imprisonment. If it be claimed in respect to any of the punishments under consideration, it will be in respect to imprisonment for life. This penalty to a man who loves liberty, and who has possessed and enjoyed it under the institutions of a free government, and especially who has learned to form those lofty notions of it which so much pains is taken to cherish and to exaggerate -- notions in which one identifies himself and his liberty with the millions of his country and their liberty through all generations to the end of time -- to such a man imprisonment for life would be a grievous penalty. Liberty to him has afforded its rich and manifold blessings -- blessings which need no exaggeration to be highly prized. It is a blessing greatly increased in his estimation by habitual enjoyment, and the loss of it is justly ranked among the sorest calamities of earth and time. For these reasons however, the penalty of imprisonment for life is seldom, perhaps never, incurred by such a man. For the most part at

least it is incurred only by those who, by its loss, scarcely incur an evil to deplore, but rather make a change for the better. Their food, their lodging, and their raiment -- all essential supplies of their wants, are more sure, more comfortable, more abundant; their society more congenial, their friendships more intimate, their real character and reputation less burdensome, their standing so nearly that of equality as to be no longer irksome, either through envy or a sense of degradation; in short, for the most part it seems not too much to say, that imprisonment for life, to its proper subjects, is almost an improvement of their condition and an increase of their enjoyments. So much truth is there in this, that it is a common remark concerning one of this class of men in the confinement of the strong walls of his prison, "He is better off than were he at liberty." I make these remarks not to undervalue the blessing of civil liberty to those who know how to use and enjoy it, but to show how comparatively inferior, not to say insignificant a thing it is to that class in the community who put it at hazard by the commission of crime; which shows, by the way, how ignorant of the principles of human action are those pretended reformers of social life, who exalt the influence of imprisonment for life to prevent the murderer's work above that of the penalty of death. I charitably hope the former would suffice to deter them from the crime of blood, who are so powerfully restrained by a thousand other influences. But how they forget, that if there be any thing that shakes the soul of a confirmed villain, it is the expectation of approaching death; the prospective horrors that give such a wrench to the mental organs, as to crush the rising purpose of blood.

In view then of the comparative insignificance of imprisonment for life in the estimation of those who are likely to incur the penalty, I ask, can it operate or be designed to operate as a legal sanction? Is it, with all the blessings which it leaves unimpaired, a direct and decisive expression, of that disapprobation which is demanded for the violation of the supreme law of the State? Can it be supposed to be intended as such an expression? It may indeed serve to show indirectly, and when the want of it would show the contrary, that the governor is not indifferent to the welfare of the State. But is it such a direct and decisive expression of abhorrence as is due to rebellion against the State? Plainly, the penalty shows that the government does not so esteem the crime; that the crime

is not in the eye of the law a malum in se, but a mature prohibitum, and that the penalty is designed to influence as so much motive, and not as a legal sanction.

With this view then of the punishments annexed to the particular statutes under consideration, I now recur to the penalty of the supreme law of the State, which is death. And here I cannot but remark what I think is strikingly shown in what has been already said, how exceedingly prone men are in forming opinions on the present subject, to overlook the main facts, even every thing which essentially belongs to the subject. What account, in their various theories and speculations concerning civil offenses and their punishments, has been made of the supreme law of the State and of its penal sanction? And yet if there is a moral government over the State, there is such a law involved in the very nature of such a government; and if there is such a law, it has its peculiar penal sanction, and if it has its peculiar legal sanction, that sanction, in view of the preceding discussion, must be the penalty of death. Death must be the penalty of the supreme law of the State, or that law has no penalty. What then is the nature and design of this penalty? I answer generally, that death to man as a being of earth and time, is justly regarded as the supreme evil, and as such is annexed to the supreme law of the State for the purpose of supporting the authority of that law; that is, as a penal sanction, or as the direct and decisive proof or expression of the lawgiver's highest disapprobation of disobedience. The general proof of this is, that if this be not the design of this penalty, then the supreme law of the State has no sanction, and of course has no authority. The penalties annexed to other laws, those particular enactments whose violations are merely mala prohibita, are not as we have seen legal sanctions are in no respect designed to support the authority of government as the direct and decisive proof of it. If therefore this is not the design of the penalty of death, then there is no penalty whatever annexed to law with this design. The law of the State has no sanction. There is, and can be no evidence in the form of penal sanction of the governor's authority. Whatever provision he may have made by other statutes for the welfare of the State, he has furnished no direct and decisive proof of his authority in the form of the requisite penal sanction. On the contrary, by his failure to furnish this proof, he furnishes decisive

proof that he has no authority or right to rule, and thus creates on the part of his subjects the right of revolution. There being no penal sanction, there is of course no law and no government. Nor can any penalty of the supreme law adopted by an enlightened civil government, which is less than the penalty of death, be a penal sanction. The reason is, that every other penalty involves, as we have seen, the essential, virtual reward of obedience, viz., the protection of life, and to a greater or less extent other blessings. The lawgiver therefore, by annexing any less penalty than death to the supreme law of the State, becomes the patron of rebellion against the government of the State. Whether therefore the penalty of death be fitted or adapted to the end specified or not, it is either designed to answer this end by the moral governor, or he does nothing to support his authority; but does that which in his own view, and in that of his subjects, unless disqualifying ignorance is his apology, utterly subverts his authority. If either himself or his subjects regard his authority as supported by the requisite penal sanction, they must regard it as supported by the penalty of death, as the direct and decisive expression and proof of that supreme disapprobation of disobedience which is necessary to his authority.

The next question respects the adaptation or fitness of the end aimed at on the part of the governor. Is it adapted or fitted directly and decisively to express and prove his highest disapprobation of disobedience to the supreme law of his government? And here assuming it to be, as it undeniably is the penalty of this law, there can be no ground of hesitation in regard to its fitness to the end designed but one -- viz., that death without torture is not, in strictest accuracy of speech, the highest degree of natural evil which the governor can inflict for disobedience. Hence it may be inferred, that it is not inflicted as the direct and decisive expression and proof of his highest disapprobation of disobedience to his supreme law, but as, merely so much direct motive to deter from disobedience. Admitting that in the strictest use of language, death is not the highest degree of -- evil possible in the case, there are three suppositions to be made and considered. One is, that on this account it is not viewed either by the governor or his subjects, according to the true mode of judging in the case, as any expression and proof of his disapprobation of disobedience whatever, and that it is not designed to

be such an expression by the governor, nor to be so regarded by his subjects. On this supposition it follows, that civil government is not in the lowest sense a moral government. There is nothing in it, either in the view of the governor or of his subjects, which answers to the idea of authority. There is no evidence from the penalty, and therefore none from any source, that he has the least degree of disapprobation of disobedience, and therefore none that he has a right to rule; but decisive proof that he has no such right. Another supposition is, that the governor and his subjects, according to the true mode of judging in the case, regard the penalty as expressing some degree of disapprobation of disobedience, but not the highest. On this supposition there can be no ground of confidence in his character -- no ground for believing that possessing both the judicial and executive power, he will not sacrifice the State, rather than sacrifice the life of the traitor that wars on its welfare and its existence. To test the truth of this, let the fact be supposed, that he refuses to execute the traitor or the murderer, because he is his friend or favorite, or even his son, and would public sentiment reproach him merely for not employing so much motive to deter others from the crime; or would it react on his character, and pronounce him in this respect disqualified for his office, and having no authority? A third supposition is, that according to the true mode of judging in the case, both the governor and his subjects regard the penalty of death as a direct and decisive expression of his highest disapprobation of disobedience to the supreme law of the State, and as such a legal sanction. This plainly is the only supposition consistent with any thing on the part of the governor which can be regarded as authority; or with the doctrine that civil government is a moral government, in that sense in which all men ought, and in which common sense does regard it as a moral government.

But here the question arises, how can the penalty of death without torture, be justly or properly regarded as a direct and decisive expression of the governor's highest disapprobation of disobedience? I answer, that death, in the common conceptions of all men, is the supreme evil to man. It is, as it were constantly, in common speech, and of course in the common conceptions of men, distinguished as the greatest of evils to man considered as a being of earth and time. It is emphatically familiarized as such to all minds. The idea of it is an idea of so great are

evil -- when it occurs, its object so absorbs thought, by its own magnitude and certainly, that suffering as an attendant circumstance is unthought of as enhancing the evil. The moral governor conforms to this universal and familiar conception of the human mind, and when he would impress every subject with his highest disapprobation of disobedience to his supreme law, he makes that evil which in their common and familiar conceptions is signalized as the greatest, the supreme evil, the expression and the proof of his disapprobation. What so natural, what so fitted to his design? He knows their conception of the evil, and is sure of the judgment which they will form of the degree of his disapprobation of disobedience to his law, when thus measured by death as its penalty. They know how the language ought to be interpreted. He knows how it will be interpreted. By making death, which is universally regarded as the supreme evil to man as a being of earth and time, he shows himself the mortal enemy of rebellion against his throne, and in the most, or rather, in the only natural, obvious, and impressive mode, manifests the highest disapprobation of disobedience to his supreme law, which he can feel toward any object which can come into competition with it as an object of disapprobation. He thus shows the feelings and the character on which his authority depends.

Thus I have attempted to show, that the view which has been before given of the nature of the legal sanctions of a perfect moral government, is substantially that which is entertained by men, of the sanctions of the supreme law of the State. If we find in the wisest administration of human government some occasional departures from the rigor of the principles contended for, still the principles themselves are most distinctly recognized. Every such departure is so obviously the result of the necessary imperfection of a human administration, in connection with the comparative inferiority of the interests to be protected, not to say of its corruption, as clearly to show that no such departures can mar the moral administration of an infinitely perfect Being, (whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and of whose dominion there is no end). Here no departure from the exact principles of truth and righteousness can result from weakness or error, or indifference to the end to be accomplished. The magnitude of the interests concerned, the value of the law as the means of securing these interests, the ill desert of transgression, the

relation and the authority of the lawgiver, and the sanctions of his authority, are to be estimated not by the standard of earth and time, but by that of eternity. And what can truth, and wisdom, and goodness demand, in the government of a kingdom, where every act of every subject is virtually either the perfect happiness or perfect misery of all; what but a fall and unqualified manifestation of the benevolence of Him that sitteth on the throne, in his highest approbation of right, and his highest disapprobation of wrong moral action? How can such a manifestation be made except through natural good and natural evil as the sanctions of his law?

APPENDIX -- No. V: THOUGHTS ON THE EVIDENCE FOR DIVINE REVELATION, AND ESPECIALLY THE ARGUMENT FROM MIRACLES.

1. Miracles defined. -- Misconceptions removed -- 2. Miracles are credible. -- A strong presumption against miracles as contrary to experience. -- 3. Are capable of proof. -- 4. Under the circumstances; and, 5. Are therefore credible. -- To complete the argument, the historical narrative must be shown to be true and its authors inspired.

It is urged that events like the recorded miracles have been wrought. -- Also by Dr. Chalmers, that miracles may be wrought by other beings than God. -- This opinion controverted: 1. As inconsistent with the proper meaning of the word; 2. As subverting the object of miracles; 3. As destitute of proof; and, 4. As opposed by reason and the Scriptures.

IT is essential to the argument for a divine revelation, that the facts related, the miracles, should be shown to be credible, since if miracles, as the opposers of revelation maintain, are incredible, not only no argument from the miracles alleged can be derived, but the whole argument for a revelation is weakened, if not subverted, by the narration

of such events.

On the question whether the scriptural miracles are incredible, I propose to show --

1. What a miracle is; and,
2. That a scriptural miracle is no more incredible than a common event.

1. What is a miracle? Different answers have been given to this question. As a general answer, comprising others which have been given, I should say: A miracle is an event which can be accounted for only by ascribing it to a direct divine agency; or which cannot be accounted for by ascribing it to any law of nature, or to the agency or action of any created agent or cause.

By nature, in this connection, I mean created beings or things. By a law of nature, I mean that established course or order of things or events which depends solely on the constitution, properties, or nature of any created thing, and which admits of no deviation by any created power. By a deviation from a law of nature, I mean any departure from or alteration of such a law, whether it includes or involves a suspension, or counteraction, or violation of the law. A miracle then essentially differs from every other event, as it involves a deviation from some law of nature as now explained.

How we are to determine whether an event is a miracle or not, or whether it actually involves a deviation from a law of nature, we shall inquire elsewhere. What I now affirm is, that no event can be a miracle which does not involve, and that every event is a miracle which does involve, a deviation from any law of nature.

It may be well to remark still further, that by laws of nature I do not mean merely that order of created things by which certain changes are produced in certain circumstances, but also that order or course of things by which certain changes are not produced, or by which they continue as they are, or produce no changes whatever. Thus it is as truly a law of nature that a dead man should remain dead, as that a living man should die when wounded in the heart; that a man born blind, or without eyes, should not be made to see by a word or by the application of clay and spittle, is a law of nature; that five loaves and two small fishes should not be augmented into a quantity of food sufficient to feed five thousand men, is a law of nature; that men cast into a fiery furnace seven times heated should be burned, is a law of nature. Now though each of these laws of nature may in some respect differ from every other, yet all of them are the result of the nature of things, and are established and determined by it; and the opposite event in each instance would involve a deviation from the law of nature which pertains to that particular instance.

Some definitions of a miracle given by able writers on the subject demand a brief consideration. Thus we are told by Mr. Horne, in his Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures, "that it is essential to a miracle that it be accompanied with a previous notice or declaration that it is performed according to the purpose and by the power of God, for the proof or evidence of some doctrine, or in attestation of the authority or divine mission of some particular person." The same thing is included in this writer's definition of a miracle. I deem this an error which consists in confounding what is or may be always an attendant of a miracle, or may be requisite to complete the proof of a miracle with an element essential to a miracle. That the accompaniment of the previous notice or declaration specified, is no part or essential element of a miracle, is obvious from the consideration, that the same event without such an accompaniment would be and must be regarded as a miracle. The event actually involving a deviation from a law of nature, would ipso facto be a miracle, whether any proof of its being a miracle were furnished or not.

Again: Dr. Brown, in his Essay on Cause and Effect, denies that a miracle involves a violation of the laws of nature.

This denial he rests on the strange and mistaken assumption that the word nature, includes all existence both created and uncreated. From this assumption it follows indeed that there can be no such thing as a miracle considered as involving a violation of, or a deviation from a law of nature; for plainly in this import of the word nature, every event must have a cause in nature, i.e., a natural cause. It is impossible that any event should not have an adequate cause. If God himself be included under the term nature, then no event can be above nature, or be supernatural. I need not say that nothing can justify Dr. Brown in giving that comprehensive meaning to the word nature which includes all existence, even God himself. No certainly must have known that the word not only in all correct usage, but especially in the common definition of a miracle, is used to exclude the Creator, and to denote simply the range of created existence. God and nature are obviously distinguished, because God is supposed to do what nature cannot. These remarks expose the futility of what this writer designed to show, that a violation of the laws of nature is a violation of the great principle, that every event must have an adequate cause. For how is this principle violated by maintaining that an event is not produced by any secondary cause, and is therefore produced by God's agency? All Dr. Brown's reasoning to show, that if a miracle be a violation of the laws of nature its reality could never be proved by testimony, because this supposes that the great principle of cause and effect is dispensed with, is owing to a strange mistake respecting the import of the phrase "laws of nature."

But this false reasoning is not the worst consequence of his mistake. According to his definition, the reality of a miracle can never be evinced to the human mind. His definition of a miracle is, that it is an event whose peculiar antecedent is the will of God. How then, if this is its only peculiarity, is an event ever to be shown to be a miracle, i.e., to be an event whose antecedent is the will of God? Why may not the will of God be the antecedent of one event as well as of another? Surely there must be some criterion of distinguishing an event which has this antecedent from one which has it not, or we are not entitled to refer one to the will of God any more than another. What then is this criterion? What, unless the event by some peculiarity authorizes the conclusion that it cannot be

produced by any created agent or cause? If we cannot decide this in view of the nature and circumstances of the event, then plainly we cannot decide that it is not brought to pass by some created agent or cause, and of course cannot trace it to the will of God. If we can decide this, then the event, and the only one which can be truly traced to the will of God as its antecedent, is an event which cannot be brought to pass by any created cause, and which is above nature. This is its grand peculiarity; that without which, there can be no warrant for ascribing it to the will and power, of God. In other words, a miraculous event is one which is a violation of, or a deviation from the laws of nature. Call it by what name or define it as we will, this peculiarity must be assumed respecting it, or the inference of a divine interposition in the production of the event can never be authorized. I only add, that all correct usage sanctions this application of the phrase laws of nature, that the peculiar views started on this point by Dr. Brown resulted from his peculiar notions of a cause, and any controversy on the topic must be a mere logomachy, as the phrase was never before used in the sense which he has given it.

2. Miracles are credible.

There is a strong presumption against a miracle, simply considered. The principle applied to all secondary causes on which this presumption rests is, that the same causes in the same circumstances produce the same effects. On this principle Mr. Hume maintains that miracles are incredible and incapable of proof from testimony. Nor can I hesitate to say, that in my opinion his argument on the subject, or the principle on which it rests, has not been successfully refuted, at least not in every instance. On this particular topic his most prominent antagonist, Dr. Campbell, has failed. I do not here speak of the entire treatise of Dr. Campbell, but only of that part of it in which he maintains the abstract principle, that testimony to facts which are contrary to all experience is entitled to credit.

Nor when I speak of the presumption against miracles simply considered, do I mean that a case may not be supposed, in which we should reasonably hesitate to say that there is not a miracle, but that no case

can be easily supposed in which a violation of the laws of nature is implied, and in which I can be reasonably required to believe in this violation, MERELY On verbal or written assertions. A case in which I might be perplexed can very easily be imagined, but after all it appears to me, that I should either reasonably feel that I did not know all the facts in the case, and on this ground should still withhold my faith, or I should presume that there were circumstances, which removed what would otherwise render the narration incredible.

The mental assurance of laws of nature and of their uniformity in the future as well as in the past, is evinced by an experience so uniform and so extensive, as to be scarcely inferior to that given by our senses of the reality of external things. And so it must be, or it is absurd to talk of a miracle; for what is a miracle if not an event contrary to all experience except of itself, and incredible therefore just in a degree proportioned to our assurance of the future uniformity of nature's laws?

Miracles ARE contrary to experience, and must be thus viewed so long as the question of their reality is agitated. That a dead man should be raised to life by a word, or that the fire of a furnace should not consume human flesh, circumstances being the same, is contrary to experience. The experiment has been fairly made, and no philosopher could hesitate so to pronounce.

The story of the King of Siam, by Mr. Locke, is a good illustration of the difference between an event aside from experience, and one contrary to experience. This is aside from experience, not contrary to it. But let all the causes of freezing exist, and exist in the same circumstances, and no freezing ever have occurred since the world began; and then the declaration that freezing would be produced by these causes would be the declaration of a miracle; and if the circumstances were alleged to be the same as in all former cases, the declaration would not be entitled to credit. See Campbell, sect. 2; Dwight, vol. ii. p. 460. I cannot subscribe to what these writers say.

3. Miracles in their own nature, equally capable of proof as are common events, i.e., the testimony of our senses, other things being equal, is to be as much relied on in one case as the other, the opportunity of judging, the state of the mind, the presumption against their existence, &c., being removed.

4. The circumstances of the miracles of Christ remove all presumption against, not to say create a presumption in favor of, their reality. THERE WAS AN OBJECT WORTHY OF GOD'S MIRACULOUS INTERPOSITION. Hence --

5. The credible nature of these miracles cannot be doubted; and therefore they may as easily be proved to have taken place by testimony as any ordinary events.

Most if not all the other direct arguments must depend on the truth of the historical narrative contained in the Bible. By this I intend the truth or correctness of the account of sensible facts given by the writers of the book, and also of the instructions of Jesus and his apostles. If this be so, then every other argument must conduct us to this conclusion, i.e., the truth of the narrative; for unless we can establish its truth in these matters, how can we come to any conclusion founded upon it? But if on the other hand we can prove the truth of the narrative in these two respects, our conclusion is incontrovertible. If for example I can in any way prove that Jesus wrought miracles, in attestation of his mission from God, I prove the validity of his claim, and that what he taught was from God; and if in addition to this, I prove that those who have given us a record of what he taught were inspired, I prove that what they wrote as his instructions was what he taught, and was from him. All this it is obvious depends on the truth of the historical narrative.

To evince the truth of the historical narrative, the arguments which are relied on are various; and though they all bear indirectly on the ultimate conclusion that Christianity is from God, yet it is important if we would

estimate their weight, to see the form and bearing of each. Some of these arguments which support the general conclusion that this religion is from God, only as they evince the truth of the historical narration, are the following: The argument founded on the credibility of the writers as witnesses. The argument founded on the reception of the history by Christians at the time it was published. The argument from the coincidence of facts related in other Writings -- as contained in Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*. Now to these and every other argument of the kind, some things are, necessary in common, and some things which are necessary to one particular argument are not necessary to all.

On the other hand, some things are necessary to each of these arguments which are not necessary to others. Thus, to make out the argument from the credibility of the writers we must prove that it was written by its professed authors; for unless we can identify the authors we can derive no argument simply from their credibility. It is true indeed that their credibility may be proved without proving by the second and third arguments before mentioned, that its professed were its real authors; but these arguments prove the truth of the record or the reality of the facts independently of the testimony of the authors, and it is quite logical to infer from such a source the credibility of the historian. Still the credibility of the historian thus proved, cannot be relied on to prove the reality of the facts or truth of the record. Thus to use it in an argument would be reasoning in a circle: it would be deriving his credibility from the truth of the record. It is true there may be what may be called particular exceptions to these general remarks. For example, we may suppose the credibility of a writer to be proved in the manner now supposed with respect to a very large portion of the facts which he records, and yet not with respect to all of them; and in this case we might reasonably rely on his credibility in regard to those facts which are not proved in any other way.

It ought here to be remarked, that while there are many ways of proving the truth of the Gospel history, considered as a narrative of facts, that no one of these arguments terminating at this point proves that the system of religion contained in the Bible is from God; for though we had the very

autographs themselves and could ascertain with exactest precision their import; though we were fully convinced of the intelligence, honesty, opportunities for information -- in a word, of the credibility of the writers as mere human historians; and though we might from the nature of the facts recorded concerning Jesus, infer that what he taught was from God, still their record of what he taught might be very imperfect; and though according to the circumstances of the case we should place a greater or less reliance on their account of his instructions, yet we should only have that ground for an unqualified reliance. that the record contains exactly what he taught, and that the Bible contains a religion from God which the case seems to demand. It is only when we take another step in the argument and show that these historians were the subjects of a divine inspiration which led them into all truth, that the mind rests in the unhesitating conclusion that Christianity is from God.

The evangelical history being true, miracles were wrought in attestation of the fact that the system of religion taught by Christ and his apostles is a revelation from God. But God only can work miracles, and he only in attestation of truth. It follows therefore that the system of religion taught by Christ and his apostles is a revelation from God.

This argument, so absolutely conclusive as it would seem to every unperverted mind, is opposed on the ground that events similar to the miracles recorded in the Scriptures have taken place in other instances. To show that this claim is wholly groundless, and that God only can work miracles in the true import of the word as used in this controversy, is the object of my subsequent remarks.

Instead of occupying time with an examination of the accounts of pretended Pagan and Popish miracles, such as those of Pythagoras, of Aristeas, of Vespasian, of the Abbé de Paris, and of others, I refer to Horne's Introduction and other works in which these accounts are examined and sufficiently refuted: 'Paley's Evidences and Douglas' Criterion.

It is claimed that the magicians of Egypt wrought miracles. If So, the proof must be found in the Mosaic account of their works. But this very explicitly informs us, that what these magicians did under the pretense of working miracles, was done by their enchantments, i.e., by jugglery or legerdemain. The facts in the case are obviously these: The magicians of Egypt attempted to resist the authority of Moses' divine mission by performing through the arts of jugglery what would be regarded wonders as great as those performed by Moses. The method adopted by Divine Wisdom to render void these attempts, was not to lay open the real causes of these seeming wonders by unfolding the arts and tricks of the magicians, but in a more direct and impressive manner, to perform works which should be seen at once to be both beyond their power, and beyond all human and created power. While such was the method adopted to convince Pharaoh and the Egyptians of Moses' divine mission, the writer of the narrative appears even solicitous to impress on the reader's mind the fact that the seeming wonders of the magicians were done by their enchantments.

There is another claim made by the advocates of Revelation and professedly on its authority, which, as it involves a principle as well as facts, has an important bearing on the argument from miracles, and demands a thorough examination.

The claim is, that created superhuman agents can, and actually have performed miracles. Thus Dr. Chalmers says: "It is presumptuous to affirm that nothing short of Omnipotence can suspend the laws of visible nature," -- "that we cannot tell what be the orders of power and intelligence between us and God; and it is a monstrous presumption to affirm that no archangel, no secondary or intermediate being whatever, can perform a miracle." He asserts on the authority of the Bible, that there are such beings, and that they have performed what are to all intents and purposes, miracles."

To the clearing away of the supposed difficulties of this subject, it is important to remark that the word miracle (_____, _____), as used in the Scriptures, is in itself wholly ambiguous. By this however I do not mean that it is so in the least degree in its actual application, in

view of all that bears on the question of its meaning in each instance of its use. The fact is far otherwise. Indeed in every case of the actual use of an ambiguous word, there is either an improper and forbidden use of it, or else the connection and manner of use show which of the different possible meanings of the word is the real one. What then is the real meaning of the word miracle, in any instance of its actual use, must be determined by the connection in which it stands.

In the most generic sense of which the word is capable, it denotes a wonder, that is, an event which is unusual and extra, ordinary in one respect, viz., that it cannot be accounted for by any known secondary cause. The word also has two specific meanings in different applications. When applied to the works of creatures it still retains its generic import, and denotes, as the nature of the case and often other considerations decisively show, wonders, i.e., events which cannot be accounted for by any known secondary causes, but which nevertheless are of such a nature as not to require, and therefore in any way cannot be ascribed to power above that of creatures. (Vide Matt. xxiv. 24.)

Again: when the word is applied to the works of God, it still as before retains its generic import, and denotes, as the nature of the case and often other considerations decisively show, wonders, i.e., events which cannot be accounted for by any known secondary causes, and which require us to ascribe them to power above that of creatures, even to that of God.

With these different meanings of the miracles in view, to affirm that miracles in the generic sense of the scriptural term _____, or in the former of its two specific meanings, cannot be ascribed to created agents, would indeed be presumptuous. The Scriptures evidently sanction this use of the term. On the other hand, to use the word in the specific meaning which it has, when applied to those works of God which are alleged in attestation of a revelation, and to affirm that created agents can work miracles, is to say the least not less presumptuous. There are in my view, on the part of Dr. Chalmers and others who use similar

phraseology on this subject, two errors. The first is, that they do not distinguish between the two meanings of the word miracle in its different applications, and treat of the subject as if the word had but one meaning. The second error is, that they use the word in that meaning which it has when applied in the controversy respecting a divine revelation (for it is undeniable that they would be understood to use it in this import), without having accurately ascertained what this meaning is.

The doctrine then -- and Dr. Chalmers fully asserts it, and professedly on the authority of the Bible itself -- the doctrine that any created agent can perform a miracle, in that sense of the word which is its true sense when applied in the argument for a revelation from God, I deny for the following reasons, viz.:

1. It is inconsistent with the true meaning of the word miracle in its present application.
2. It subverts the peculiar characteristic of a miracle as a proof of divine interposition.
3. It is destitute of all proof.
4. It is opposed by decisive proof from both reason and the Scriptures.

Before I proceed in the discussion, let it be remarked that the inquiry respects miracles only in that specific import of the word which it has, when used to denote a work wrought in attestation of a revelation from God.

1. The doctrine that any created agent can perform a miracle, is inconsistent with the common and only just conception of such a work.

I need hardly say that the ablest advocates of a divine revelation, as well as their opponents, have considered a miracle as an event above the power of any created agent. Is this idea then essential to the true idea of a miracle? If not, then there is no word which usage has sanctioned to denote that class or kind of events which are above the power of created agents. Is this credible after all the discussions which have been had respecting the reality of such events? Will it then be said that there are no works, or that it is presumptuous to affirm that there are any, which some of the creatures of God cannot perform as well as God himself? I think not. But if we are authorized to affirm that there are works which God only, and not creatures can perform, then I ask what are they? The only answer from those who agree with Dr. Chalmers must be, we cannot tell - the works, if such there be, which God only can perform, cannot be distinguished by us from works which some of his creatures can perform. Therefore if water be turned into wine, if mountains be removed, if the dead be raised to life, we cannot decide from the nature of the event whether God or a creature has done it. Is this the common conception or judgment of those who believe in miracles, or even of those who believe in God? Or do they, under the name of miracles, conceive of certain works which God only can perform, and which the human mind can and is bound to distinguish from those which creatures can perform as exclusively the works of God? If the human mind is competent to make no such distinction, then instead of talking of God's works, let us speak of those which may or which may not be the works of God.

Again: I ask in what does a miracle, according to the principle of Dr. Chalmers, differ from an ordinary event, or one brought to pass by the agency of second causes? Not in this, that the former is above the power of any created agent and the latter not; for it may be true according to Dr. Chalmers that a miracle is not above the power of some created agent. Is the difference then, that a miracle is an event which appears to us to be above the power of any created agent, while an ordinary event does not? But I ask, how does this appear to us? Plainly not from any thing we know or have good reason to believe, either from the nature of the event or the manner of its production; for it is an event which may be brought to pass, by a created agent. It does not therefore appear to us at all to be

above the power of a created agent. We have no means of deciding whether it is so or not. Is it then said that a miracle is an event which lies without the limits and range of what Dr. Chalmers calls "visible nature," or of which we know of no adequate created cause, and of which therefore God by direct agency may be the cause? But according to the principle of Dr. Chalmers, it is equally true that God may not be the cause and that a created agent may be. If then it is essential to his definition of a miracle that God may be its cause, it is equally essential that God may not be its cause, and that a creature may be. A miracle therefore would be an event concerning whose author or cause we can decide nothing, except that either God or some creature of God is its cause; i.e., which may be or may not be an ordinary event. What other difference can be supposed on the principle of Dr. Chalmers, I am unable to conceive; and to the question, what is the difference between a miracle and an ordinary event (by which is meant an event brought to pass by the agency of second causes), the only answer is -- no difference; at least no one is authorized to conceive or to affirm that there is a difference. Palpably as this conclusion follows from the principle of Dr. Chalmers, it is believed, that no one will adopt it.

I recur then to the idea of a miracle as an event which is. above the power of any created agent. If this idea be conceded to be involved in the true definition of a miracle, then the very supposition that a created being should perform a miracle, carries in it this palpable inconsistency or absurdity, that a created being can perform what none but the uncreated Being can perform; that a created being has power to do what he has not power to do.

It is plain then that Dr. Chalmers denies in one essential respect the commonly received definition of a miracle. This he must do, or give up his position that some created superhuman agents may have power to perform miracles. With the idea of a miracle as exclusively the work of Omnipotence, if we admit that Gabriel possesses or even may possess the power to remove mountains, then if mountains are removed, we cannot regard the event as a miracle. The very supposition of a miracle performed by a creature is absurd and self-contradictory, unless we

abandon the commonly received definition of a miracle.

2. The doctrine that any created agent whatever can perform a miracle, subverts the peculiar characteristic of a miracle as a proof of divine interposition. Dr. Chalmers not only maintains as we have seen, that created agents may for aught we can say, perform miracles, but he asserts on the authority of the Bible, that such agents have performed what are "to all intents and purposes miracles." Having taken this ground, he is fully aware of the peculiar pertinency of the question which he puts: "How comes a miracle, and in what circumstances, to be the token of a revelation from God?" This question he treats under three suppositions; the first is, that the so called miracle, i.e., an event which may be brought to pass either by God or a superhuman creature, is wrought in support of either known falsehood or known immorality. In this case he justly claims that the event must be ascribed to a created superhuman wicked agent. The reasons for this are obvious. It is a work beyond the power of any human agent, and must be ascribed to a superhuman agent; it is done for a malignant or selfish purpose, and must therefore be ascribed to a wicked superhuman agent. But the problem to be solved is, why not ascribe it to God? I say this is the problem to be solved, and that Dr. Chalmers in his solution of it, has assigned at most only a part of the reason as the whole. The reason which he assigns as the whole reason is, that the work is done for a malignant or selfish purpose. I admit that this is a reason and a decisive one. God is good and cannot be charged with countenancing falsehood or immorality. But this is not the whole reason for not ascribing it to God. There is yet another, viz., the work done is one which according to the supposition may be done by a created being; so that entirely aside from the falsehood or immorality of the affair, there is this decisive reason for not ascribing the work, the so called miracle, to God. There is nothing in its nature to justify us in ascribing it to God, but on the contrary, that which decisively forbids it. There is not indeed in the work, considered aside from the selfish purpose, that which would oblige us to ascribe it to a created superhuman spirit, but there is that which would decisively forbid us to ascribe it to God; there being no possible reason for doing so, except that he might have done it, while it is also true that it might have been accomplished by another agent, which is plainly no reason for ascribing it

to God. Thus the possibility that a work (whether it be called a miracle or not does not alter it) may be performed by a created agent, divests it wholly and absolutely of all decisive evidence or proof that God has done it. The nature of the work, though called a miracle, furnishes no more reason for concluding that God has done it, than that some other agent has. Dr. Chalmers obviously deceives himself by calling the work a miracle, leading himself into the common conception of a miracle; for it is plain that his mind adopts the erroneous, groundless assumption, that there is some reason furnished by the nature of the work which would justify us in ascribing it to God, and even requires us to do so, were it not for the opposing considerations that it is done for a false or selfish purpose: whereas the nature of the work furnishes not the shadow of a reason for ascribing it to God, but decisive reason for not doing it, since, although it may be performed by God, it may be performed by some other being.

Again: Dr. Chalmers' second supposition is, that the so-called miracle is clearly wrought for a benevolent purpose, and the very revelation declares that it is wrought by the power of God. He claims that in such a case, we should and ought to accept of the supposed revelation as coming from God. I answer, that I have no occasion to deny, that in the case put, it would be reasonable to accept of the professed revelation as from God: that when every thing supposable in the case bespeaks goodness, and honesty, and truth, and when the bearer of such a message declares that it is from God, and that certain works too which might be performed by some other being, are in fact performed by God's power, it might be highly reasonable to accredit all that such a messenger declares. But the question is, what have these so-called miracles to do with our belief? Why do we believe in the fact that these works called miracles, are done by God, and not by some other agent who has power to do them as well as he? Dr. Chalmers assigns two reasons for so doing: one is the manifest benignity and truth of the message, and the other, the declaration of the bearer of such a message. These reasons it is admitted are quite sufficient. But after all, what is the force or influence of the so-called miracle? Just nothing at all. That the message is benignant is seen in its own nature: that the messenger is true, and honest, and entitled to credit, arises from the known nature of his

message, and any other considerations that may be supposed to exist in the case; while the fact that the so-called miracle is the work of God, is proved solely by the nature of the message and the testimony of the messenger, and not at all therefore by the nature of the work itself. So far as this is concerned, some other agent might have, done it as well as God; and the messenger might with the same propriety have declared that the death of a living man was produced by the direct agency of God, as declare that the restored life of a dead man was so produced. In either case he might indeed be entitled to credit, for the reasons assigned by Dr. Chalmers. In neither case could the nature of the event amount to a particle of proof of God's agency, since in either it might be brought to pass by other than His. Dr. Chalmers says, "that the accordancy between the characteristics of the professed Revelation and our previous notions of the divine character, leaves to the miracles all that force and authority which properly belong to them." But what previous force or authority must belong to a work to convince me that God has done it, when I am authorized to believe that another being may have done it? Why talk of restoring to miracles their previous force and authority as evidence, when they have and can have none? Is it not plain that Dr. Chalmers reasons all the time on the secret assumption, that there is something in what he calls miracles which proves decisively that they are the works of God? And is it not equally plain, when he maintains that these, are not exclusively the works of God, that their characteristic as evidence of God's interposition is wholly destroyed?

We come to Dr. Chalmers' third supposition, that of a professed revelation, supported by what he calls miracles, which confines itself to a bare announcement of facts relative to the existence of things wholly beyond our observation or knowledge. He maintains that the miracles would in this case sustain the claim of the professed revelation on two grounds; first, the absence of every thing which indicates the agency of a wicked spirit; and, secondly, that God would not lend himself, either by permission to others or by direct agency, to the deception of his creatures. So far as the first of these reasons is concerned, if it be admitted to be a sufficient reason for not ascribing the so-called miracles to a wicked spirit, it is not a reason in the lowest degree for ascribing them to God, since the I may be the works of a good though a created

spirit, commissioned by God to bear the message. Again: if the absence of every thing which indicates the agency of a wicked spirit is a reason for ascribing the miracles to God, this reason does not result from the nature of the works, but solely from other and distinct considerations, viz., that they are either the works of God or of a wicked spirit, and that they are not the works of the latter, because if they were, there would be indications of his malignant agency. But here the question is, whether the evil spirit might not be sufficiently wise for his own purposes, to avoid furnishing even the least indication of malignity, and whether there is not somewhat of an unreasonable assumption in this argument. But waiving this altogether, and admitting that in the case supposed, there is good reason for believing that the works are God's, still the reason is not furnished by the nature of the works. Any other evinced to be the results of his direct agency, would be as good evidence of God's interposition as these so-called miracles. Proof furnished of God's direct agency from testimony, or the circumstances of an event, is surely a very different kind of evidence from that furnished by a work which God only can perform. But, says Dr. Chalmers, God would not permit wicked spirits to deceive his creatures, i.e., to furnish legitimate proof that falsehood is truth, by working miracles. Certainly not. But this is not the question nor any part of it; but whether God would not permit them to do those works which they have power to do; and if he would not, why? Dr. Chalmers says this would or might be fitted to deceive his creatures; and this is the reason that God would not permit them to do the works. I answer, that it would not in the least degree be fitted to deceive them; in other words (and this is what is meant), it would furnish no legitimate proof, nor the shadow of it, that falsehood is truth; that works which are not God's works are God's works. Do we not know or believe, according to Dr. Chalmers, that these superhuman beings have power to perform these works? Why then if they actually do them, should we be deceived, and conclude that God has done them? This is the only way in which we can be deceived by them; and why conclude from their nature that God does the works, when for aught we know there are a thousand other beings who might do them? Such deception truly would be wholly gratuitous on our part, for there is absolutely nothing in the nature of the works which can authorize, I but that which absolutely forbids such a conclusion.

Take as an illustration, the miracles by Moses on the authority of which he claimed of Pharaoh that he, should let the people go. What would Pharaoh have said to this demand, on the principle of Dr. Chalmers? The reply would have been, "Your pretended works of God may have been performed by some other agent. They can therefore neither require nor authorize, but must forbid me to conclude that they are performed by God. Such works can furnish no evidence that God has sent you." Moses, according to Dr. Chalmers, could not deny this. He could only say in reply, that "they are not the works of a created agent, but are God's works." To this Pharaoh might rejoin by asking, "Where is the proof that they are the works of God?" Moses answers, "You must take my word for it." "That," says Pharaoh, "I am not bound to do. I might as well take your word that any other work or event is God's, and not only so, I might as well take your word, that God has sent you, as take your word that this is God's work. Besides, you appealed to the works, as the proof of God's agency to establish your claim to a divine mission, and now you ask me to take your simple word for it." "True," says Moses, "but is it not plain that God would not deceive you by permitting a creature to do these works?" "Deceive me!" rejoins Pharaoh; deceive me in what, or by what means?" "Why," answers Moses, "deceive you in leading you by these very unusual works, to conclude that they are God's unless they really are his works?" "I am in no danger of that," says Pharaoh; "so long as I have common sense I shall never be deceived by such works into the belief that they are God's, knowing as I do that they may be done as well by angels or devils as by God himself." And truly, why should he be deceived in a case in which there is nothing to deceive him? Plainly he should not, though all the waters of Egypt were turned into blood.

Dr. Chalmers however, is very explicit on this point. He says: "Though neither a good nor a bad morality stood associated with the message, still on the strength of natural religion would we defer to the authority of the miracles alone;" i.e., to the authority of works which, in his view, devils have power to perform, and for the non-performance of which by devils no reason can be given. Is it not plain that Dr. Chalmers in this view of the subject, all the while assumes in his own mind the common definition of a miracle, as that which Omnipotence only can perform, and that in this lies what he calls "its proper force and authority?" and yet in affirming

the possibility that miracles should be performed by other beings than God, does he not forbid us to ascribe them to God, and deprive them of every particle of force or authority as evidence of God's interposition?

3. There is no proof that any created being can perform a miracle, or any thing which shall have the semblance of one.

On this point there can be no hesitation, provided we adopt the common definition of a miracle. For then the very supposition that a created agent should perform a miracle involves, as we have seen, a palpable absurdity. But the question now is, whether created beings can perform works which we shall reasonably regard, or which by the laws of evidence we shall be bound to regard as miracles; that is, as works wrought by God in attestation of a revelation. It is obviously assumed by Dr. Chalmers and others, that such works have been and may be done by such beings. This class of works is conceived to be beyond the powers of any created agents, with which we are acquainted, or beyond the powers of "visible nature."

According to the view now under consideration, the true test of a miraculous work is, that it is one which in its own nature is beyond the power of any created agent with which we are acquainted; and which therefore, while it may be for aught we can say to the contrary, the work of a creature, may also be the work of God. Such a work it is claimed, being declared by a witness of a certain character and in certain circumstances to be God's work, ought to be believed by us to be so, and to be regarded as a proof of a divine revelation. According to this view, the real test or proof that an event is a miracle is, that it is in its own nature beyond the power of any created agent with which we are acquainted; for the supposed testimony that it is wrought by God, does not determine it to be a miracle, but only a miracle wrought by God and not by a creature: or if it be said that the fact testified, viz., that it is wrought by God, is essential to its being a miracle, and as such a proof of divine revelation, then the nature of the fact as it falls under the cognizance of our senses, is no more proof of a revelation, than any

ordinary event concerning which the same fact should be testified in the same manner. The raising of a dead man to life, viewed as an event within the power of created agents, and yet testified by the supposed witness to be done by the power of God, furnishes no more proof of a revelation than would the death of a living man testified by the witness to have been effected by the power of God; and neither adds a particle of proof to the fact of a revelation, beyond that of the naked testimony of the witness. The witness is no more entitled to credit when he asserts that the supposed work, which according to the supposition may be performed by a created agent, is performed by divine agency, than when he asserts the fact of a revelation. The work itself therefore, in its own nature, adds nothing to the proof of such a fact, and in this respect is wholly useless. This may be illustrated by an example—that of a king, sending his signet by a messenger. If we suppose that there were a hundred or a thousand other such signets, any one of which the messenger might have obtained, it is plain that the showing of the signet with the assertion that it is the king's, would still leave the simple testimony of the witness as our only reliance; and no proof from the signet, or from his possession of it, would be added to his mere testimony to the fact of his mission by the king. One who should believe in his mission would reasonably say -- I believe it not because the messenger has the signet, for others have the same, but simply and solely in view of the character of the witness and the circumstances of his mission.

Whether then created agents can perform works which we shall reasonably regard as miracles, or having the semblance of miracles to our mind, that is, works which shall reasonably appear to us, or be regarded by us as proofs of a revelation, is a question which depends entirely on another, viz.: whether we can draw the line of demarkation between those works which God, and which creatures can perform. Just so far as we can draw this line, and no farther, are we competent to decide the question whether an event is a miracle or not. Of every work in respect to which we are authorized, in view of its nature, to say God only can perform it, we can assert that it is a miracle, i.e., a proof of a divine revelation, but of no other. That any created agent has power to perform a work which we are authorized to say God only can perform, cannot be admitted. Of course no created agent, even if we suppose his

powers to transcend those of any finite creature with which we are acquainted, or those "of visible nature," can do any work which can be esteemed miraculous. If cases can be supposed in which we cannot decide whether God only can do the works, then of course we cannot decide that they are miracles, and may be in doubt whether they are or not; i.e., we can make no decision, and of course must remain uninfluenced by them. Before then we can decide that any work apparently done by a creature is a miracle, we must decide that it is a work which God only, and not a creature can perform. So that if we decide that a creature has actually done it, then we know that it is not a work which God only can perform, and therefore that it is not a miracle. Or if we decide that it is a work which God only can perform, then we cannot admit that a creature has done it. It is utterly impossible therefore, that any mind should find the least proof that any creature can perform a miracle.

But that created agents can work miracles is claimed on the basis of matter of fact. The cases alleged are such as the following:

The raising of Samuel from the dead by the Witch of Endor, (1 Sam. xxviii.) The design of the narrative seems to be to assert a miracle. Samuel, according to the account, was raised from the dead; while the manner of the event was such as clearly to show that the woman had actually no concern with it. "She cried with a loud voice," that is, she betrayed disappointment and consternation. "She saw gods ascending out of the earth;" that is, in her panic she saw what was wonderful and strange, she knew not what. When inquired of by Saul "what form he was of," her answer was, "An old man cometh up and he is covered with a mantle;" while, "Saul perceived that it was Samuel." It is also manifest from the narrative, that the sorceress had not even prepared her enchantments. Thus from the obvious disappointment and consternation of the woman, and from the appearance of Samuel as having no connection with her enchantments, it was apparent to Saul that her pretensions were groundless, and that those who claimed the power over familiar spirits were impostors.

Had it been said in this narrative that the woman did not expect to see Samuel come forth, all the difficulty would vanish. But I ask, had not the writer of this narrative as much reason for supposing that his readers would so understand the matter, as had he expressly asserted the fact? I think so, not only in view of what he has said respecting the manner in which the woman regarded the appearance of Samuel, but for other reasons. That God raised Samuel from the dead we conclusively infer from the nature of the event, and also from the fact that in proof of it, Samuel actually uttered a prophecy and addressed it to Saul. The law against witches was quite sufficient to show that God did not work miracles by their instrumentality, and that he did not authorize them or others to believe that he would; as he must have done had he in this instance, or in any other, have raised a dead man to life in connection with their enchantments. On this supposition, why was not Saul even authorized to make the application to this woman which he did make, and to entertain the expectation from her which he so evidently did entertain? Such must have been the views of every unbiased Jewish reader of this narrative. Of course it is as certain that the woman did not expect to raise Samuel from the dead, as had the historian asserted the fact. Hence I conclude that the miracle of raising Samuel was wrought for the double purpose of convincing Saul that she was an impostor; by the way in which it was done, and the manner in which the woman regarded it; and also to reprove Saul for his wickedness, and to denounce on him the judgment of death by the mouth of the risen prophet.

Another class of facts claims consideration, viz., demoniacal possessions. These facts as given in the literal interpretation of the scriptural narrative may be admitted. Still there is nothing in them miraculous even in appearance. They must have been regarded by those who witnessed them either in view of their nature, or of their frequent occurrence, or of both, as ordinary events in distinction from miracles. In this manner it is obvious on the face of the narrative they were regarded. Whether we can or cannot assign the reasons why the people of that age regarded them as ordinary events, the natural results of adequate power of created agents, the fact that they were so regarded cannot be denied by any one who admits their reality on the authority of the history. If he admits the reality of the facts, he must admit also that they were not

miracles in the view of those who witnessed them. We, indeed, may be obliged to regard them as a peculiarity of another age. But whatever the phenomena were, we cannot avoid the conclusion that their cause was known, and known as an adequate second cause. In these events therefore, there could have been no semblance of a miracle to those who witnessed them. They were Jews who asked, "Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

Should it here be said that whatever may be supposed in respect to the people of another age, if the same phenomena were to occur in our time they would be justly regarded as miracles -- such as that recorded, Mark, v. 4 -- I reply, that if the same phenomena were to occur now, either their nature or frequent occurrence, or something else equally decisive, would reveal their nature as the effects of adequate second causes, and of course prevent the possibility of mistaking them for miracles. To suppose that they should occur in such circumstances as to require us according to the laws of faith to believe them to be miracles, is to suppose that God should lay us under obligation to believe that to be true which is actually false. Besides, we never could be required by the laws of faith to believe them to be miracles, so long as we knew or had good reason to believe, that they might be the effects of created power. Such events in such a case could not furnish the least evidence that they are performed by divine power, or that God has any more concern in bringing them to pass, than the commonest events. If we suppose such an event to occur, we might or we might not be able to assign the reason for its occurrence; but surely we could not reasonably suppose, that God designed by it to convince us that he had done what he had not done, and what we should not have the least reason to imagine he had done. If we suppose such a design on his part, it must be our own fault if we are deceived by it. But it may be supposed, that we have no reason to believe that the imaginary extraordinary event can be brought to pass by a created agent, and that all the evidence in the case goes to prove that it is accomplished by the power of God, and that nevertheless God may permit or commission a created agent to perform the work in attestation of a divine mission -- and on this supposition it may be asked, whether the event would not be good evidence to our minds of the fact of a divine mission, and in this respect be entitled to the same influence, and answer the same purpose as a

divine work? I answer, yes; because all the evidence in the case would be to one point, viz., that it is a divine work. The mere supposed possibility that it is a creature's work would be no evidence either way, and the conclusion that it is God's work, would be as truly authorized and required with such a possibility as without it. Why then resort to the present supposition, and especially that of a possible fact, which if real would imply that God should lead us and oblige us to regard that as evidence which is not so in the truth of things, and which to our minds proves that to be true which is not true viz., that the event is the effect of divine power, when it is not?

I am aware that another than the literal interpretation of the scriptural language on the present subject, has been adopted by some advocates of revelation, of no less reputation than Sykes, Lardner, Farmer, and others. This class of writers admit the incredibility of the narrative when literally interpreted, and attempt to relieve the subject of difficulty by rejecting the literal interpretation. The question here respects the origin of certain phenomena, and not the reality of the miracles wrought by Christ and his apostles, of which these phenomena were the occasion. I cannot however concede to the opinion that the language of the Scriptures on this subject is not to be literally interpreted. I see in the first place no real reason assigned for it, except the supposed incredibility of the facts as given by a literal interpretation. But why are they to be pronounced incredible? Solely on the ground that they are aside from, not contrary to all experience, except that given in the scriptural narrative. Be it so. But this no more establishes their incredibility, than the want of experience by the inhabitants of the torrid zone, establishes the incredibility of the fact that water freezes in a more northern climate; or than the want of experience by the greater part of the human race establishes the incredibility that stones should fall from the atmosphere. Indeed why is it at all incredible, that the facts in question should actually have existed as the scriptural history relates, even from the beginning of the world, considered as the peculiarity of another age, being in their nature well understood by the people who witnessed them, and designed to render the triumph of the Redeemer over the grand adversary of God and man more complete and signal, and to cease, when that object should be accomplished? Besides, no man is authorized to say, from the nature of

the phenomena, that there were no created agents adequate to their production, known to those who witnessed them. Of course the facts in question in respect to incredibility stand on entirely other grounds than the facts of miracles. In the second place, the language of the scriptural writers cannot in my view, according to any authorized principles of interpretation, be understood in any other than its literal import. On this point I can here only remark, that whether the facts be credible or incredible, the language of the narrative could not be more absolutely unequivocal than it is, that the facts actually occurred. How is it possible that this plain narrative of plain men should tell us of the spirits that held converse with the Saviour; that supplicated his forbearance and a respite from torment; that professed their knowledge of him as the Holy One of God; that were commanded by him to be silent, and that when ejected from those whom they possessed, were permitted by their own request, and in execution of their own will, to enter a herd of swine, and to make new manifestations of their power and malignity? How are these things possible, if the writers of the narrative did not mean to be understood as recording the reality of these spirits, and of the facts Connected with their agency? And why should the plain meaning of the language be rejected solely on the ground of the supposed incredibility of facts, which are in no degree incredible? That the writers intended to be understood as giving us a literal account of the facts, cannot, I think, be reasonably doubted. The only alternative therefore, is either to receive it as true, and to admit their authority as historians, or to regard their narrative as proof of their credulity, and of that of the age in which they wrote; which, if this be all that can be said, is nothing less than infidelity. I say if this be all that can be said, for there is one thing more at least of what may be true on this subject, viz., that while this is literal language, and expressed the actual belief of the age or the people, and also of the writers, it is still only the language of appearance. Whether this be so or not, I am not prepared to decide with confidence. I would however admit that in some instances things or events are in words ascribed to the devil, as in Matt. xiii. 39, which if ascribed in literal language to that principle of evil which is inseparable from a principle of good in the very nature of things, would better harmonize with just and necessary conceptions of God, and of his providential government.

4. There is decisive proof both from the Scriptures and from reason, that no created being can perform a miracle.

This proof from the Scriptures, it is true, can have no influence except with those who attempt to defend the scriptural miracles. With them the question is, what are the events to which the scriptural writers appeal as proofs of a revelation; or rather what is the nature of this proof from miracles? On this point I shall only ask what is it, except that in their view and that of other men, miracles are works which God only can perform? John, iii. 2; Acts, x. 38, 40; John, v. 36, and x. 21, 25; Matt. xii. 24, 28; Ex. iv. 11; Ps. xciv. 9, and cxlvi. 8; John, ix. 32, 33.

The proof from reason that no created agent can perform a miracle, if by a miracle we mean a work or an event which God only can perform, is still more decisive, consisting in the self-evident proposition, that no creature can do that which God only can do. The same thing is true, if we define a miracle to be an event which involves a deviation from, or a violation of, a law of nature; for it is no deviation from a law of nature for a creature to bring to pass an event which he has power to bring to pass.

But it is claimed by some that a miracle, considered as an event brought to pass only by the power of God, cannot be evinced to the human mind by legitimate evidence, not even to that of an eye-witness; and this on the ground that we are ignorant of the powers of nature or of created agents, and that therefore whatever the event may be in its nature and its circumstances, we are not competent to decide that God brings it to pass.

Before replying to this argument directly, I would remark that I shall assume what it admits, that a miracle as defined, is possible. I shall also assume that whatever presumption there is against a miracle from experience, it is completely removed by the object for which the miracle is wrought. This is fairly assumed, for the question now is, not whether a miracle can be reasonably admitted on the ground of testimony as

opposed to experience, but it is simply whether the event, supposing it to be brought to pass by the power of God, can be satisfactorily proved to be, since as it is claimed, for aught that can be shown, it may be accomplished by created power. It, is not whether God can work a miracle or bring to pass an event by his own direct and immediate agency, but it is whether he can bring it to pass in such a way or manner as to prove to our minds, according to the laws of rational belief, that he has brought it to pass by his direct and exclusive power. It is claimed that he cannot, and this on the ground that the event, be it what it may, and produced in what manner it may, may for any evidence to the contrary, be brought to pass by the power of some created agent.

To this reasoning I propose to reply, by stating and illustrating what I deem sufficient grounds for inferring the reality of a miracle, and by showing that these are sufficient for the inference.

I remark then, in the first place, that the creative power of God may be an incommunicable attribute. By creative power must be understood at least power to create substance -- this visible universe from absolute and universal nothing. The true and essential conception of creative power is, that it is necessarily eternal, underived, and self-existent. As such its existence could neither be produced nor be prevented. The mind cannot conceive as it must, power to be eternal, underived, self-existent, without conceiving it to be necessarily underived, and in its own nature incapable of being produced or communicated. For whatever is necessarily conceived by the mind as existing by a necessity of its own nature, is necessarily conceived as incapable in its own nature of being produced, created, or communicated. Space, for example, cannot be conceived to be capable of being produced or created.

Creative power is possible or capable of existence, without being created or produced. So is self-existence. Space and duration are possible without being created or produced, and so is the equality of two and two with four. Whatever is capable of existing and actually exists without being created or produced, exists by necessity and cannot be created or

produced. It is eternal and self-existent.

Some things however are necessarily conceived by the mind as existing by a necessity of their own nature, directly, and others indirectly. Thus space and duration are necessarily conceived by the mind as existing by a necessity of nature directly; by which I mean, that the mere conception, or as logicians say, the simple apprehension of space by the mind, necessarily involves or gives the conviction of its necessary existence in re. In other words, the object of thought has necessarily in the view of the mind a corresponding reality. The self-existence of God is necessarily conceived by the mind to be necessary in its own nature indirectly; by which I mean, that while the bare conception or simple apprehension of a self-existent God, does not necessarily involve or give the conviction of the necessary existence of such a being in re -- in other words, while the object of thought has not necessarily in the view of the mind a corresponding reality, yet when the fact of a self-existent God is given or proved to the mind, then the mind necessarily conceives it to be necessary in its own nature, and thus incapable in its own nature of being produced or created.

Without claiming then that the mind on the condition of the bare conception of creative power necessarily gives as it does give on the bare conception of space, directly the conviction of the necessary existence of the corresponding reality, still it is manifest that it necessarily gives this conviction indirectly, that is, when the fact of such power, as in the present case, is admitted by the mind. This necessary existence of actually existing creative power is not the necessity of existence which is given by the mere certainty of existence, that is, the necessity that a thing is while it, is; but it is a necessity of existence given in the nature of such power, as that which could neither be caused to be, nor prevented from being, any more than space or duration.

Power could not create in the first instance without being in its own nature necessarily uncreated; in other words, creative power which creates in the first instance, is necessarily conceived by the mind to be

necessarily incapable in its very nature of being created or produced, just as the actual self-existence of a being is necessarily conceived to be necessarily incapable of being produced or created, and therefore incommunicable. Nor does this necessity that the power which creates in the first instance is itself incapable of being produced or created, result from the mere circumstance that the instance in which the necessity is given to knowledge, is the first of creation; for though given clearly in this instance, it is given as the necessary nature of power which creates from absolute and universal nothing. This conception of creative power thus formed becomes as a necessary conception the true and essential idea of creative power in all cases. It is a conception which involves the knowledge of the nature of creative power as being necessarily incapable of being produced or communicated, and what the mind thus knows in respect to creative power, it cannot cease to know while it knows what it really is. The mind then in its true conception of creative power must conceive it to be necessarily underivable and incommunicable.

I now proceed to say, that no power except that which is adequate to create, or creative power-power which is adequate to give to substances their existence and their natures -- can be adequate to destroy, or change, or counteract them. The being who has power adequate to transform the nature of substances, and thus destroy, suspend, or counteract their action as causes, and thus to suspend those laws which result from their nature, has power which is adequate to create substances with their nature. Power that is adequate to raise a dead man to life, is and must be power to give existence to a living man from nothing. Indeed the one power must be identical with the other, since the giving of life to a dead man is as truly and essentially an act of creation as would be the act of giving him life from absolutely nothing. If then creative power is incommunicable, the act of giving life to a dead man must be the act of God, and not the act of any creature of God. This view of the subject I confess myself inclined to adopt.

If it be said that it is too metaphysical to be satisfactory, I ask, why is not also the opposite assumption, viz., that God can impart creative power? The proposition that God cannot impart creative power, is plainly no more metaphysical than the proposition that he can. And if my opponent has a right to rest on the assertion that he can, I have as good a right to rest on

the assertion that he cannot. But I have not rested the proposition that he cannot impart creative power on mere assertion. Whether the reasons given be sufficient or not, I can only say they seem so to my own mind.

Without however resting the question on the position now taken, let us examine it on the ground that God can impart creative power to creatures.

I remark in the second place, it is reasonable to believe that God would not impart creative power to a creature if this be possible. The supposition that he should do this, involves so many things which are inconsistent with a sound theism, that it can hardly require a refutation. If any should insist on the possibility of his giving existence to such a creature, it maybe replied that the supposition of such an existence is wholly gratuitous and unauthorized. From the mere light of nature, we have no evidence of the existence of any superhuman beings intermediate between God and man. Should an event be known to occur which is beyond the power of man and of every known created agent, it would be unreasonable to ascribe it to any being but God, since he is known to possess, and is the only being who is known to possess, power adequate to its production. Again: the supposition that a creature possesses creative power, involves the supposition that he possesses infinite, attributes. A being who has power and knowledge which qualify to create from nothing, must have power and knowledge which are infinite, that is, attributes limited only by what involves a contradiction. To suppose such a creature is unphilosophical. When the mind is brought to the conclusion of an omniscient and omnipotent Creator, it is brought also to this, either that this Creator is an eternal, self-existent being, or that there is some other. We must conclude that there is an eternal, self-existent being who is the Creator of all created things, or that there is a created creator, or that there are many created creators. If the eternal, self-existent Being is not the Creator of all created things, then there may be as many created creators, with one exception, as there are things created; and to admit this is to violate the axiom of sound philosophy, that we are to admit no more causes than are necessary to account for an effect. Besides, there is a strong presumption against the supposition that

an eternal, self-existent Being should give existence to creatures or to a creature, if this be possible, having the same infinite attributes with himself, especially if we reflect that each of these creatures would be able to create other beings ad libitum of the same infinite attributes.

Assuming then as proved, the existence of one and only one eternal self-existing Creator, who alone possesses creative power, the existence and the nature of all created things must depend on him to the exclusion of every other being. No created being can either destroy, change, or counteract the nature of created things, which is exclusively the effect of creative power. To suppose the contrary is to deny the exclusive power of God to create, since the being who can destroy, change, or counteract the nature of created things, must have power to create.

Again: from the nature of created things in given circumstances necessarily result what are called laws of nature modes of operating or acting, by which physical agents in certain circumstances necessarily produce certain effects; and while the nature of created things, from which these laws necessarily result in certain circumstances, remains the same, and is neither destroyed, changed, nor counteracted, these laws must remain the same.

As no created being has power to destroy, or to change, or counteract that nature of things from which the laws of nature necessarily result, and since no deviation from these laws can be effected, without destroying or changing or counteracting that nature of things on which these laws necessarily depend, and from which they necessarily result, it follows that no created being has power to cause a deviation from any of the laws of nature.

Further: man is competent to decide to a certain extent what are laws of nature, and what are deviations from these laws. To deny this, is to deny the authority of our senses in matters of universal experience and observation, and on which the senses can solely decide. And here it is

obvious at once that if we are not to rely on this authority, then not only the Christian must abandon all his reasoning for miracles, which is founded on the experience of his witnesses, but the infidel must abandon all his reasoning against miracles, which is founded on the experience of the rest of the world. The infidel, when it will subserve his purpose in argument, as strenuously maintains as others, on the authority of experience and observation, that certain causes in certain circumstances must produce certain effects. For example, that a man placed in a furnace seven times heated must be burned: that water cannot be turned into wine, or a dead man be raised to life, by a mere word. These and a thousand similar facts which are laws of nature, are settled by experience and observation, nor can the unperverted mind deny or doubt them. Let it now be supposed that we see a man placed in a furnace seven times heated, and not burned. I say see him, I mean that we ascertain (so far as the senses when perfectly employed on the question of fact can ascertain any thing, which is solely a matter for the senses to decide upon), that such are the circumstances of the case. Now the question is, are we to rely on these mental decisions or judgments? What are they, and on what grounds do they rest? The first is, that such is the nature of fire and of human flesh, as God has made them, that in certain circumstances, viz., when brought into contact in a furnace seven times heated, and when there is no cause either natural or supernatural to prevent the effect-the fire must burn human flesh. To say that we are not to rely on this judgment or decision respecting the nature of the thing," under consideration, is either to deny, contrary to all experience and observation, that fire has always produced this effect in the given circumstances; or to deny the self-evident proposition, that the same physical cause in the same circumstances must produce the same effect; or to deny both. As no one will deny either, it must be received as a fact unquestionable and incontrovertible, that from the very nature of the things, as God has made them, fire must burn human flesh in the circumstances now supposed.

Another decision or judgment in the case, so far as the senses perfectly employed on the subject can decide, is, that the man is placed in the circumstances supposed. I speak not now of any judgment or influence derived from the fact that the man is not burned. This may or may not

modify or change the final conclusion in respect to the facts in the case. How this is, we may see presently. The fact that the man is not burned may be a ground of inferring some other cause or circumstance in the case than any which is cognizable by the senses. The judgment I now speak of concerns the causes and circumstances, as these are cognizable simply, by the senses, and aside from the fact that the man is not burned. I suppose the case to be one in which the mind, so far as the senses when perfectly employed on the subject can enable it to judge or decide respecting the case, necessarily judges or decides that the man is placed in the circumstances supposed. I claim that aside from any inference from the fact that the man is not burned, the true and only judgment of the mind would and ought to be, that the man is placed in the furnace seven times heated, and that there is no cause either natural or super-natural to prevent the burning of his flesh; and that this decision or judgment, were it not for the single fact that he is not burned, would be entitled to unqualified confidence.

But the supposition is, that the man in these circumstances is not burned. How then is this fact to affect our conclusion? We are plainly not to conclude that our senses do not give us all the facts and circumstances of the case which are cognizable by the senses. The senses are according to the supposition perfectly employed on the question of fact, and their decision is to be relied on as in other like cases. When thus employed they have never deceived us. In this respect they are to be absolutely relied on. We are therefore bound to believe that the facts and circumstances supposed, are the only facts and circumstances of the case, unless we have reason from some other source for inferring some other cause or circumstance which is not cognizable by the senses. Such reason we have in the fact -- a fact given by the senses that the man is not burned. This obliges us to conclude that the effect of burning is prevented by some cause which is not cognizable by the senses when perfectly employed. This must be either some natural cause, that is, some created agent not cognizable by the senses, or it must be God.

Is it then a created agent which is not cognizable by the senses? I answer, first, that we have no evidence from the light of nature, that there

is any such created agent intermediate between God and man. As God is the only being who is known to possess power to prevent the effect in the case supposed, the only rational conclusion is, that its prevention is to be ascribed to his power. If on the authority of our senses we could decide that a watch had disappeared from the room in which we are, and that no individual had been in and passed out of it except A. B., we should be bound to believe that A. B. had taken the watch. The reasoning would be this: The watch must have been taken away by some visible agent; A. B. is the only visible agent by whom it could be taken away; he therefore has taken it. So in the case under consideration. The effect must be prevented by some invisible agent, or some one not cognizable by the senses. God is the only known agent who is not cognizable by the senses, and who could prevent the effect; he therefore has prevented it. It is here to be remembered that for reasons already assigned, there is no more presumption against the man's not being burned than against his being burned; in other words, that the prevention of his being burned by divine agency in the case, is as credible as the fact of his being burned in another case by natural causes would be. If we suppose a case in which the presumption from experience against a divine interposition is not removed in the manner already explained, it might be one of difficulty. We might be compelled to oppose what seems to be given by the senses perfectly employed, to the testimony of all past experience, and we might and probably should inquire again, whether what seems to be given by the senses perfectly employed in the case, is really the result of such an employment or use of these means of knowledge; or if it proved to be such, we might begin to distrust the authority of the senses, which is one of the most difficult of all tasks that can be imposed on the mind; or we might suspect that in drawing universal conclusions from universal experience and observation we had gone too far, and begin to think that what has been, at least as determined by experience, is no proof of what will be; in short, we might be in the supposable quandary of being bound to judge on a question, when the evidence on both sides, is exactly balanced, a case which may be imagined, though it can never occur; since if we really suppose such a case, we cannot be bound to form a judgment. The case to be decided on, is one in which it is as credible that the burning of the body is prevented by the agency of God, as that the watch is removed by the agency of A. B. The mere possibility of another invisible agent ought no more to diminish the confidence of our conclusion in the one case than in

the other.

Again: the mind cannot reasonably admit the existence of a created agent as the author of the supposed event; but there is good and sufficient reason for disbelieving and denying it. Whenever the senses perfectly employed on the subject have decided on the facts or circumstances in which physical phenomena occur, they have in all cases decided correctly. The mind has often from an imperfect use of the senses, judged rashly and incorrectly. But no erroneous judgment or decision can be traced to a perfect use of the senses. The mind has thus decided, that the facts and circumstances which exist and which are cognizable by the senses, are all the facts and circumstances of the case, to the entire exclusion of any and every cause or agent not cognizable by the senses. This it has done in numberless instances and never found itself mistaken. No cause or agent not cognizable by sense, has ever interposed and by the result evinced the reality of its existence. It is true the mind has other proofs of the existence of God. But it has no proof of the existence of any created agent not cognizable by the senses. And here it naturally inquires, why if there are such created agents have they never evinced their existence until now? Why have they never prevented human flesh when in contact with fire from being burned? Why have they never turned water into wine, or raised the dead to life? Why should they do such things now, when they have never done them before? By this process of thought the mind, in connection with uniform experience and observation, comes to the conclusion, not only that the senses give all the facts and circumstances of the case which are cognizable by the senses, but that these are all, to the entire exclusion of any and every created cause or agent. The senses are in fact, and are obviously designed to be, the medium of deciding on the existence of physical phenomena and their causes. With this authority they do decide in certain cases, that the causes and circumstances which they discover, are all the created causes concerned in those cases. The mind is thus brought to the conclusion before the event and irrespective of it, what the created causes are and what they are not. For example, when it has decided in this way that a man is thrown into a furnace seven times heated, or that a man is dead, it also decides that there is no created agent which can interpose and prevent the burning of the body, or raise

the dead to life. Indeed if the mind did not rely on this judgment or decision as one fully warranted when thus based on the authority of the senses, that is, if it admitted the possible existence of created agents not cognizable by the senses, with power thus to interfere with the operation of causes which are cognizable by the senses, and should allow this fact to modify or control its judgment, then it could not decide that any of those things cognizable by the senses are causes of the phenomena connected with them; for all these phenomena might be the effects of the power of agents not cognizable by the senses. A man might be actually burned in a furnace, or killed by being pierced through the heart, or by poison, or sustained in life by food, &c., &c., and yet neither the fire, nor the dagger, nor the poison, nor the food, be the cause of the effect connected with it. These things are sufficient to show, that the mind is under the same necessity of regarding the authority of the senses, when they decide that certain sensible causes and circumstances, which they discover by the senses, are all the created causes or agents concerned, which it is under of regarding these things as causes at all.

Once more: there is another consideration still more decisive on this point. The mind cannot suppose that there are created agents not cognizable by the senses, with power to interfere with the operation of causes which are cognizable by the senses, without supposing created power which is adequate to destroy, or change, or suspend, or counteract the nature of created things, which is exclusively the province of creative power. But to suppose this is to deny the exclusive power of God to create, since it must be admitted that a being who can destroy, or change, or suspend, or counteract the nature of created causes must have power to create. Hence all sound and consistent theism admits, that power thus to interfere with the nature of created things or causes must be creative power, and must belong exclusively to God. Since therefore no created being has power to change, or suspend, or counteract that nature of things from which the laws of nature result, and since there can be no deviation from these laws without either changing, or suspending, or counteracting that nature of things on which these laws depend, it follows that no created being has power to cause a deviation from the laws of nature. Man then being fully competent to decide in certain cases what are laws of nature, and also what are deviations from these laws,

and that God only can cause such deviations, is competent to decide that certain supposable events, viz., those which involve a deviation from any law of nature, are and can be brought to pass only by the power of God, and are, according to our definition, miracles.

We have now finished the preliminary discussion respecting miracles, which prepares us briefly to present the argument from this source for a divine revelation. We have shown that --

Miracles wrought for the purposes and ends of the scriptural miracles are credible events; that not only is every aspect of incredibility removed from these events by their object, but a very high degree of presumption -- even proof -- furnished of their reality.

It follows that: The testimony of the sacred historians to the reality of miracles -- thus placed beyond all question -- confirms their reality as decisive proofs of a revelation from God.

THE END.